

RECOLLECTIONS
OF
THE KABUL CAMPAIGN,
1879 & 1880.

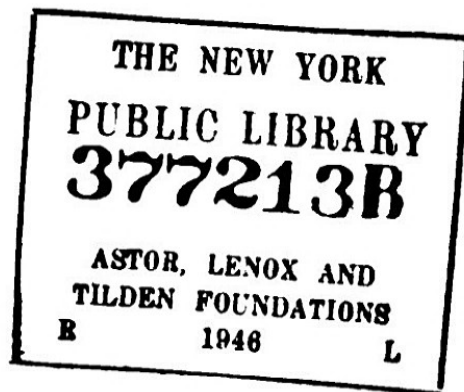


BY
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TO

The Memory

OF

TWO BRAVE SOLDIERS,

LIEUT.-COLONEL BROWNLOW, C.B.,

COMMANDING 72ND HIGHLANDERS,

KILLED IN ACTION, SEPTEMBER 1st, 1880,

AT THE BATTLE OF CANDAHAR,

AND

BREVET-MAJOR JOHN COOK, V.C.,

5TH GOORKHAS, PUNJAB FRONTIER FORCE,

MORTALLY WOUNDED ON THE TAKHT-I-SHAH HEIGHT,

KABUL,

DECEMBER 12TH, 1879.

"Far off sepulchred in such 'pomp they lie,
That kings for such a tomb might wish to die."



APR 30 1946

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PREFACE.

THE narrative contained in this unpretending volume is a brief description of places and facts that have come before the notice of the Author while serving as a medical officer with three branches of our native army in India, viz. mountain-artillery, cavalry, and infantry, and for a short time with General Roberts's Staff, during the Afghan campaign of 1879 and 1880.

The original notes were written during the winter and summer of 1881 in the inhospitable region of Gilgit, Cashmere territory, the extreme limit of civilisation beyond our Northern Frontier, and without any opportunity of referring to official and other documents; though the manuscript was not completed until after the Author's return to Amritsar, a civil station in the Punjab.

Before submitting this book to the public, I despatched the greater portion of the proofs, roughly bound up, to General Sir Frederick Roberts, V.C., G.C.B., now Commander-in-Chief of the Madras

Army, by whose courtesy I am permitted to publish the annexed letter :—

“It must always be difficult, if not impossible, for a subordinate officer with an army in the field to know the reasons why this thing or that thing is done or left undone.

“A commander is necessarily guided by a combination of circumstances, all of which he must carefully weigh and consider, and few of which can, at the time at any rate, be made public.

“The general observer can only judge by results, and very possibly may never be in a position to become acquainted with the causes which led to these results.

“I never expect, therefore, to find a strictly accurate account of the campaign in Afghanistan written, until the time comes for the historian to have access to the many papers and documents which are in the possession of myself and others, who were the principal actors in the war.

“At the same time I think you have formed very correct conclusions on some of the most important points. I allude particularly to the deductions you have drawn regarding the attack on the Embassy, and your remarks about Yakub Khan's conduct during the advance on Kabul. Yakub Khan's object was to prevent our entering his country. He knew that he had made no attempt to save the lives of Sir Louis Cavagnari and his brave companions, even if he had not been mainly accessory to their murder,

and he felt that he would be found out once we were at Kabul.

“In the hopes of stopping us he sent the Mustaufi (quite the ablest man in Afghanistan) and his Wazeer, Shah Mahomed, to meet me at Ali Khel. They endeavoured by every kind of argument to induce me to delay my movements.

“Finding that his ministers were unsuccessful, Yakub Khan came himself to meet me at Kushi, and did all he could to make me retrace my steps, or stay where I was.

“As soon as he found that my plans were not to be changed, he sent emissaries in every direction to raise the Ghilzais and other tribes. I was fortunately not deceived by him, and did what little I could to get to our side those people whom I understood not to be altogether loyal to the Amir. I did not put much faith in their promises of neutrality or assistance; but I thought it probable that so long as I pushed on, and was successful, some of them at least would not openly oppose me.

“My great difficulty was want of transport; but knowing well what was going on all around me, and feeling quite certain that Yakub Khan was acting a treacherous part, I determined to get possession of Kabul with the least possible delay. Had I not done so, or had there been the slightest repulse, we should have had to encounter as powerful a combination as two months later necessitated our retiring within Sherpur.

“Large bodies of men had responded to Yakub Khan’s call, and were hurrying from all directions towards Kabul. Numbers of these, as some of them afterwards admitted to me, were turned back by the fugitives from Charasiab.”

When the Kabul War broke out in 1878, the Author was on sick-leave in England. Anxious to see service, and hoping that his regiment, then quartered very close to the scene of operations, might be sent forward, he applied for leave to appear before a medical board. The board permitted his return to India, and January 1879 found him once more at the station of Bannu, on the Punjab frontier, somewhat to his own disappointment, for the war was practically over. In the month of March he was ordered to proceed to Thull, the point where his story commences.

EASTBOURNE,

March 2nd, 1883.

RECOLLECTIONS

OF THE

KABUL CAMPAIGN, 1879 & 1880.

CHAPTER I.

A Dak Bungalow in War-time.—Thull in March 1879.—5th Punjab Infantry.—March to Peiwar Kotul.—Camel-eaters.—Commander-in-Chief's Tent.—Kuram in March 1879.—Peiwar Village, 1879.—Commander-in-Chief leaves Peiwar.—Shalufzan.—To Ali Khel.—Bian Khel in April 1879.—The Lakarai Pass.—Captain Strahan and Major Stewart's Attempt to explore the Pass.—Ali Khel in April 1879.—Spence shot at.—Sentry shot at.—Night shooting.—Gough's Victory at Futteabad.—Death of Major Wigram Battye.—Roadways in Afghanistan.—Chicore shooting.—Supplies.—Stealing Supplies.—Sport at Kuram.—Decoys.—Sport in Kuram.—River Kuram.—Climate.—Ali Khel in May 1879.—Reconnaissances.—Woodthorpe Expedition.—Afghans differ.—Relief of Woodthorpe.—Reconnaissances.—Attempt to surprise a Village.—Places of Interest seen from Ali Khel.—Martungai.—The Shutargardan Pass.—Visit to the Shutargardan.—Hazar-Darakt Defile.—The Shutargardan Pass.—Kasim Khel Fort, 1879.—Return to Ali Khel.—The Thabi Pass.—Ali Khel.—Reviews in Ali Khel.—Horse Show.—The Jagis.—Behaviour of our Troops.—Political Agitators.—The Jagi.

THE rain was falling in torrents on a bleak day in the middle of March 1879, when a weary traveller arrived

at the frontier station of Thull, and after some difficulty found his way to the traveller's bungalow. Two single-poled tents, provided by Government, proved a welcome refuge from the pouring rain. A table, a bed, and two chairs formed the furniture, while an ample carpet covered the floor. The pitiless rain and wind found their way in at several apertures and corners of the tent; but having arranged the table in one dry corner, the bed in another, the traveller, or rather, I, soon forgot my troubles in the savoury viands provided by the khansamah.

Only one who has traversed the road, or rather track, which runs for more than thirty miles through the Waziri hills, between Edwardesabad and Thull, can possibly have an idea of the natural difficulties presented in many places on this route. For miles the road runs amongst brown and barren hills, from which the rays of a fierce sun cast a burning, dazzling glare. Here it leads over a difficult ascent and descent, there along the bed of a river, now through a rocky defile, then above a giddy height, and thus offers every difficulty to the camel, the only transport animal then procurable. Still, owing to the energy of the Deputy-Commissioners of Edwardesabad, and Dera Ismael Khan, thousands of maunds of food were conveyed to Thull by this route for the use of General Roberts' army. Indeed, both these districts played an important part in the food-supply of the Kuram Valley Force.

Having warmed the inner man, and recovered from

the fatigues of the journey, I proceeded to make some official visits in the Head-quarters camp, and saw General Roberts himself, who was kind enough to give me a glass of milk punch of the most excellent quality. A shaggy beard hid the lower part of his face, so that at first I hardly recognised him; but the old cheerful smile and kindly manner were unchanged.

Thanking him for the warming nectar, and especially for his having honoured me with the trust of his own bodily welfare, as well as that of his staff, for such was to be my favoured lot, I hied away to bed while my soaked garments were being dried. Here long-suppressed feelings of ambition had full sway. What opportunity of future renown might not occur, now that quite unexpectedly my lot, though in a very small degree, was associated with the recent hero of the Peiwar fight. Had not the General asked me, "Are you ready to march at a moment's notice?" Perhaps some forward movement was imminent; and then the excitement of the battle, the pleasure at last of getting under fire, and of sharing danger with a General! A bullet might hit me, and then might not I be honourably mentioned amongst the list of killed and wounded? Such and many other innocent projects flashed through my mind; and have they not passed through the thoughts of many a young fellow like myself, who had never seen a shot fired, or a man killed; and, how often are they realised? And now

that the battle is over, are one's ideas of war altered? The troubles of marching on the 80 lbs. Kabul scale, cold, heat, dust-storms, bad water, have been experienced, the tactics of war, successful and unsuccessful fights have been witnessed, as well as retirements before the enemy, and enforced confinement to barracks, while the despatches written after the occurrence of each of these events have been read with avidity and interest ; and yet, somehow, after all, my ideas of war have not been realised.

As I fell asleep that night the rain was falling heavily, and continued to do so all the following day. The next morning bright sunshine after rain showed the post of Thull in a very pleasing aspect. Thull, with an altitude of 2,500 feet, lies on the left bank of the river Kuram. The dak bungalow tent commanded a fine view of the Kuram high road, running some fifty feet below, as well as the river swollen into a mighty torrent by the recent rains, dashing along at the base of the Waziri hills, which formed a commanding position on its right bank opposite. From here the Waziri robbers used sometimes to fire random shots into camp.

The 14th Bengal Lancers occupied the high ground behind the bungalow, and in their hospitable mess-tent many a weary traveller found shelter and food, as well as warmth, notwithstanding the smoke which failed to make its exit through the temporary chimney. While on service each regiment was allowed only an ordinary sepoy's tent to dine in. The mess-houses

were formed by excavating the ground inside the tent to the depth of two or three feet, which allowed of twice the accommodation, and permitted of servants standing behind the chairs and passing round the table. A mud stove in one corner, and small mud side-walls, completed a comfortable dining-room, if only the chimney could be prevailed upon to draw.

The 29th Punjab Native Infantry were encamped on the ground opposite the dak bungalow; and the Head-quarters camp, neatly laid out into streets, rested on their right flank, with the Commissariat yards and tents in their rear. Behind the bungalow, to the right, a high range of hills stretched away towards Kohat. On the left a spur ran down to the Kuram river, and over this the road to Kuram passed by a very steep ascent. Kadimuk, 4,900 feet, formed the highest peak of this range, whose brown sides were covered with stunted shrubs and olive and juniper trees.

A squadron of the 9th Lancers occupied the ground on the right of the Kohat road, while on the high ground, two miles further on, the white tents of the contingents of the loyal chiefs of Nabhu and Kaparthalla were visible. Previous to the heavy rain which fell in March, the road between Kohat and Thull was in good working order. Carts and baggage-waggons of sorts daily arrived, and a continuous stream of baggage, troops, artillery, &c. was constantly passing backwards and forwards along the road below the bungalow-tent.

The presence of General Roberts, who was awaiting the visit of the Commander-in-Chief, as well as the members of his staff, added life and excitement to a very dull spot.

The arrival of Sir Frederick Haines was eagerly expected, for things had come to a standstill, and it was then hoped that some definite policy, or an advance on Kabul, would be decided upon—the wish for the latter being, of course, father to the thought. But heavy rain, which on the frontier has a special way of washing away roadways, or cleverly cutting amateur dykes for itself, and destroying bridges, was in no degree to be stayed by the advent of the chief of the army, whose progress was delayed several days.

The 5th Punjab Infantry arrived a day previous to the Commander-in-Chief. General Roberts and his staff rode out to meet them returning from Kohat, whither they had gone to form the escort of the guns captured at the Peiwar Kotul. This regiment had greatly distinguished itself during the reconnaissance in force before the Peiwar Kotul on the 28th November 1878, as well as during the assault.

The Commander-in-Chief arrived the next day, escorted by a party of the 9th Lancers, and a company of the 11th Native Infantry. After a day's halt, the Head-quarters camp was struck, and we all marched up the Kuram valley, our ultimate destination being the Peiwar Kotul.

There is little to note about the road running

between Thull and Kuram, which was reached in four* marches. The view from the summit of the Thull pass, 600 feet, is very fine, commanding on the south side Thull and its surroundings, and on the north side the entrance to the Kuram valley. At Badish Khel, seventeen miles this side of Kuram, part of the Punjab chief's contingent, consisting of artillery, cavalry, and infantry, was drawn up to receive the chief, under General Watson, V.C., and his Adjutant-General, Major W. Anderson. The head-quarters of this contingent were eventually formed at Kuram, and they did not proceed further up the valley. The arduous duties exacted from them, in guarding convoys, as well as the custody of the posts of communication between Thull and Kuram, were performed in a most exemplary manner, while our own troops were relieved of these harassing duties until the contingents were recalled.

On the night previous to our arrival in this camp, a camel-driver, who had strayed from camp with the callousness peculiar to his tribe, was murdered

* The ordinary stages for camel-convoys are as follows :—

1. Thull to Chapri	7 miles
2. Chapri to Alizai	12 „
3. Alizai to Shinak	6 „
4. Shinak to Badish-Khel	9 „
5. Badish-Khel to Wali Mahomed Fort	7 „
6. Wali Mahomed Fort to Kuram	10 „
	<hr/>
Total	51

by some local hillmen, while his body was crimped and slashed after their manner.

During the afternoon, when riding back with another officer to a snipe jheel we had observed on the march, I witnessed what I could hardly have believed a fact, but, surely, as we trotted by, their faces and hands begrimed with blood, sat a woman and two or three children eating the raw flesh of a dead camel.

Our tents were pitched and struck in the way common to all camps on the march. The tent occupied by the Commander-in-Chief formed the head of the street, and was remarkable for its exceedingly small and unpretending appearance—if, indeed, it was not the smallest in the camp. The example, indeed, was good, for we were all marching on the Kabul scale, and my own leaky covering always seemed to me more comfortable afterwards.

The next day's march brought us to Kuram, the capital of the Kuram valley. Kuram, 4,800 feet above the level of the sea, lies on the left bank of the river. The township is composed of scattered villages running down towards the river, the largest villages and grave-yards resting near the bank. The principal buildings of Kuram are two large forts, situated on the left and right of the road, and connected by a willow-lined avenue. The larger of the two was surrounded by a ditch, contained all the commissariat and transport stores, as well as the arsenal, postal, telegraph offices, and the field hospitals. The country

intervening between this fort and the river was terraced into rice-fields, this grain being grown here in large quantities. The smaller fort was then occupied by the 5th Goorkhas. The Sufaid Koh range of mountains runs some nine miles distant, east and west, to the north of the fort. The ground between is barren and arid until within a few miles of the hills. Here the land has been brought under cultivation, and is irrigated by water diverted from channels issuing from two very pretty gorges opposite Kuram. Many beautiful villages, well-timbered, and surrounded by orchards, nestle on the lower slopes of the hills, and up the gorges. The chenar or sycamore tree here attains to a great height as well as girth, and under the shade of its spreading boughs the country-people chiefly pass their time in the hot weather.

Two deep gorges cut the road just this side of Kuram. Beyond the second one, on the right of the road, is a clean-looking bungalow with a verandah and a good garden; opposite is a large and pretty garden, afterwards placed under the management of a European soldier. This house belonged to Sirdar Walli Mahomed Khan, a brother of Shere Ali, but was then occupied by Colonel Waterfield, the Political Officer, who was suffering from a badly broken leg.

On the afternoon of our arrival a review of all the troops in garrison was held by the Commander-in-Chief. General Roberts commanded in person. After

the usual march past, the chief addressed the troops and complimented them on their distinguished behaviour at the capture of the Peiwar Kotul, in which the 5th Goorkhas, one of the regiments present, had taken the most prominent part. His Excellency, however, hardly drew attention to this fact. The accurate marching past of the 23rd Pioneers drew forth his special commendation. Having witnessed several reviews of troops in Afghanistan, marching past has seemed to me by no means a *sine quâ non* of success in action; for, certainly, the two native regiments who most distinguished themselves in this campaign (both being Goorkhas) almost invariably marched past indifferently.

The next day's march brought us to Habibkilla, now called Peiwar,—thirteen miles. The road led across a great stony plain, cut up by ravines, and gradually ascended to the village of Peiwar, which has an elevation of 6,000 feet. I have often since ridden along this road, which is particularly long and tedious, for until close to the Habibkilla the distant point appears to remain as far off as ever. A beautiful panorama of recent snow, with dark masses of pines underneath, covered the line of hills running some miles on our right flank, and terminated in the hoary mountain Sika Ram (15,600 feet), which over-towers the Peiwar heights by nearly 7,000 feet. A guard of honour of the 72nd Highlanders, another regiment which had borne a distinguished share in the flank attack, was drawn up to receive

the Chief. Here, too, were quartered the 2nd Punjab Infantry, and Swinley's mountain battery,* so that by degrees we were becoming acquainted with all the actors in the Peiwar fight.

Again was the weather unpropitious, and heavy rain fell all that night, and still more heavily the next day; which, of course, meant feet of snow on the heights we had to visit. A beautiful morning succeeded the rain, and the hills presented a magnificent coating of snow which reached down to nearly 6,000 feet.

Although the road up the heights was reported blocked with snow, the Commander-in-Chief could not delay, and we started soon after an early breakfast. Leaving on our right the long nullah—from the head of which the great mountain Sika Ram seemed to take origin, and the bitter blasts from which, in the cold December night, nearly froze our little army silently plodding on to the flank assault—we rode through low-wooded hills, passing a watch-tower here and there, and finally turned to the right up a glen which led to the Peiwar Kotul and the scene of the front attack. At the base of the zigzags a guard of the 2nd battalion 8th King's, a regiment which shared the chief honour of the front attack, as it is called, met us. We then slowly climbed the hill through a

* The No. 1, or Kohat Mountain Battery, were present at the capture of the Peiwar Kotul heights, where their commander, Capt. Kelso, was killed early in the day. Swinley's Battery, No. 2, arrived some days afterwards.

cleared track in the snow, which lay more than a foot deep. As we passed into pine land, above 7,000 feet, the dark foliage and trunks of these stately trees, whose branches were bending under the weight of the recent snow, helped to soften the dazzling glare reflected by the rays of the setting sun. The summit of the Kotul is commanded and guarded by a pretty picturesque watch-tower built of stone, and the eye of the tired traveller is relieved by a most beautiful view of pines and snow. Indeed, from this spot is obtained a peep of the most perfect scenery I have observed in Afghanistan. A guard of honour of the 2nd battalion 8th King's was drawn up outside their mess-house. The Commander-in-Chief briefly addressed the men and officers, alluding to the strong tie which held him to them, as he had spent some of the happiest years of his life in the 1st battalion of the gallant King's. G-3 Royal Artillery, whose guns did very severe execution on the heights, in the front attack, were also quartered here, as well as a fine-looking regiment, the 28th Punjab Native Infantry.

After a sumptuous breakfast with the 8th, the Commander-in-Chief visited some of the points of interest in relation to the fight of the 2nd December, which entailed some severe climbing, the highest strategical point culminating in a ridge 9,000 feet high, which overlooked the Huriab valley and the Mongol country. On this position one of our 9-pounders was mounted, guarded by a detachment of the

8th Foot. From here the huge strength of the line of defence, as well as its great area, were well seen, and much surprise was expressed at the position having been carried so easily, more particularly as all the approaches, except the flank, were swept by the enemy's guns. It must have been gratifying to the General that such high critics were pleased to express their approval and approbation; indeed, I heard a general officer waggishly remark, "Roberts, what did you give them?" There is little doubt that the key which unlocked this chosen position of the enemy, was the strong flanking column commanded by General Roberts himself. The Afghan General was well aware of this weak point, for he defended it with barriers of trees, not dangerous in themselves, but rendered deadly by the great steepness of the hill they guarded. How, after a cold night's march, these barriers were carried, without a check, by our troops, is well known. By the subsequent advance, the Afghan line of retreat was directly threatened; and all who are acquainted with the Afghan character know, directly this has been accomplished, the fight is over. Any doubt about flight on their part was materially settled by the fire directed into their camp from two of our mountain guns, which had gained a position commanding their camp.

Before leaving Habibkilla, Sir Frederick Haines inspected the garrison, justly complimenting Colonel Brownlow and the 72nd on their splendid appear-

ance, and passing some favourable remarks on the 2nd Punjab Infantry commanded by Colonel Tyndall, who were about to return to the plains, so severely had the exposure of guarding the Kotul told on their physique.

After the inspection was over the Commander-in-Chief set out for Kuram, making a detour to the village of Shalufzan, celebrated for the beauty of its women, the quality of its grapes and fruits, and the magnificence of its chenar trees. Dr. Aitchison, the botanist with the force, writes: "At Shaluzan, where the trees grow to as great a size as any in Kashmir, and much more healthy, owing to the dryness of the climate preventing the numerous lichens and fungi affecting the trees, there are Chanars (*Platanus orientalis*) with a girth of fourteen, sixteen, eighteen, twenty-five, and one thirty-three feet. The walnuts are finer than any I have ever seen. Many trees of nine, eleven, twelve, thirteen, and seventeen feet. With rare exceptions the trunks never hollow or unsound. They have neither lichens nor misletoes infesting them as in Kashmir." At this season, the end of winter, Shalufzan had not come into bud, and was not looking its best, the trees and vines being bare of foliage. A large cypress tree, planted above a musjid, in a high position at the end of a spur overlooking the village, attracted much attention. After partaking of tea and the hospitality of the headmen of the village, the Commander-in-Chief continued his journey Indiawards to Kuram,

accompanied by General Roberts, who returned to Peiwar a day or two afterwards.

Expectation in the meantime ran high that an advance on Kabul might yet take place, for the Treaty of Gundamuck had not been signed.

Troops were being rapidly pushed up the Kuram valley; and the General, on the day following his return to Habibkilla, turned his head towards Ali Khel, the future rendezvous of his army. As we again marched through, early in April, the beautiful pine-clad gorge leading into the Huriab valley, the snow which fell so heavily on the 22nd and 23rd March was fast melting, and the 8th Foot were hard at work making a road for the guns. Our camp on the first day was pitched on a high ridge overlooking the Huriab stream at a place called Bian Khel, situated about half way between the Peiwar Kotul and Ali Khel. The line of telegraph, under Mr. Joseph's superintendence, had been completed as far as this point. On the right of the road we passed several villages with cultivated land around, the Huriab stream lying on our left. Indeed, a great deal of ground was under cultivation, though many of the houses appeared deserted and in a tumble-down condition. A heavy snow-storm in a previous winter was said to have destroyed many, whose roofs had fallen in, while the inhabitants of others had fled, not quite certain of the reception they might meet with from the new conquerors. After our occupation of Ali Khel many families returned to their homes to enjoy

the ease of British rule. The road to Ali Khel at this time was truly native, that is, merely a track in many places, and the 23rd Pioneers, whose camp was pitched below our ridge, were hard at work along it. On the General riding by their tents, the men of the regiment turned out and cheered lustily.

The ridge on which our camp was placed commanded a view of the Huriab stream running some 200 feet below, the opposite banks being covered with the edible pine, which grows here in large quantities. The fruit of this pine is in shape like a small almond ; heated in a frying-pan, and eaten with salt and butter, it forms a very palatable dish for those who like it. Martungai, 13,000 feet, a lofty spur of the Sufaid Koh, or Sika Ram, rose up in our rear. This mountain was connected on its east side with the Sika Ram by a spur, over which ran a pass known as the Lakarai pass, a short and most important cut or road between the Huriab and Kuram valley and the Khaibar route, opening into the southwest extremity of the Jallalabad plain. During the month of May of 1879 an effort was made by an officer of the Trigonometrical Survey, Captain Strahan, R.E., to reconnoitre this pass. Captain Strahan was accompanied by Major, now Lieutenant-Colonel, Stewart, of the Guides Corps. The date of their departure from Gundamuck and of their probable arrival at the Lakarai pass overlooking the Huriab valley was telegraphed to General Roberts, who, with a large party of officers, rode out to meet

them from Ali Khel as far as the pass—some eighteen miles. The survey party, however, did not appear, the reasons for which are detailed in the following narrative.

“Acting under instructions from Colonel (now Sir C.) Macgregor, of the Quartermaster General’s Department, we started from the camp at Gandamak early in the morning of the 30th May 1879. Our party consisted of, besides two Europeans, a Pathan attendant for each, and a man to look after two mules, on which were laden our bedding and survey instruments, viz. a small theodolite and a light plane table, with its ruler and stand, &c.

“Our orders were to explore and make a detailed report and sketch-map of the route from Gandamak *viâ* Hisarak, Mangal, and the Lakarai pass to Ali-khel.

“The first four or five miles from camp were through country belonging to the Kagiani tribe, where there was no fear of our being molested; after that was all Ghilzai territory, as far as the Lakarai pass, where we expected to be met by a party from General Roberts’ force at Alikhel, who were to escort us in. It will thus be seen that we required only an escort capable of taking us safely through Ghilzai territory, and this we supposed had been supplied us when we were told that Asmat-oollah Khan, one of the principal and probably the most powerful of the chiefs of that tribe, had ordered his Naib (lieutenant) and about eighteen of his men

to accompany us. It was not until we had proceeded about four miles from camp that we found that we were mistaken, and that an error, which threatened and eventually proved to be fatal to the success of our expedition, had been made in the selection of our escort.

“The Naib, in conversation with Stewart (an accomplished Persian linguist), informed him that it was impossible to follow the proper road past Hisarak to Mangal, as Mahomed Shah Khan, chief of Hisarak and of the country for several miles beyond, was a rival of Asmatoollah and would assuredly stop us; at the same time he said he knew of a short cut through the hills which would avoid all hostile villages, and by which we should be able in all probability to reach Mangal in safety, and from there to the Lakarai pass, he said, there would be no difficulty, as the whole country was under Asmatoollah.

“This at once put an end to the possibility of reporting on the whole route, but we considered it better to go on, and do all that was in our power on the way to Alikhel, and if possible get leave to reconnoitre the remainder of our route on our way back.

“The only other alternative was to return and ask for an escort to take us through the Hisarak country; but as orders were daily expected for the return of the troops to India, time was important, and every day's delay would make the expedition more dangerous and difficult. At Nalgozi, a small Ghilzai village, the first we came to, we halted for a few minutes,

but the manner of the villagers being very much the reverse of friendly, we moved on, the Naib and the greater part of our escort, however, staying behind. On reaching the foot of the hills the men with us sat down, and we waited for the rest of the party to join us. We were losing all patience, when at last they came up and we commenced the ascent. We afterwards learnt that it was at this time that news of our expedition was taken to Mahomed Shah Khan at Hisarak, and the delay enabled his men to catch us up before we had reached Asmatoollah Khan's territory.

“An ascent of some 2,000 feet landed us on the top of a spur, from which, after crossing a small cultivated plateau, we gradually descended again into a narrow valley, up which the path ran following the banks of a stream which it constantly crossed. On the top of the hill we had passed close to a tent guarded by Afghans, and again during our descent we had seen in the valley below us a small camp; we were informed that they were occupied by some of the family of the Khan of Hisarak, who had been sent here for safety in case our troops attacked that place. Our escort hurried us past, but no attempt was made to stop or molest us in any way.

“On reaching the stream most of our guard stopped to say their prayers, whilst two or three men only accompanied us. For a mile or so all was quiet, but then an alarm was raised that robbers were coming up from behind to attack us. We looked back, and

saw our escort forming a line across the pass on each side of the path, with the intention, apparently, of opposing the advance of the supposed robbers. One man remained with us, and told us to hurry on as soon as possible, which we accordingly did; but the path got worse and worse, and our progress, of course, slower and slower. We managed to get over about another mile, to a spot where the valley opened out somewhat at the junction of two streams, when a couple of half-naked unarmed men ran past us gesticulating violently. We did not understand what they meant, and took but little notice of them, but hurried on, when two large stones fell close to us, and on looking up we saw these men on the rocks above our heads warning us back; on looking behind we saw Stewart's man struggling with an Afghan who was trying to take his talwar from him, whilst a number of others were moving up from behind. We at once retraced our steps and joined our three men and the mules, and were all immediately surrounded by an excited crowd. Our escort was completely outnumbered; indeed, except the Naib and some one or two men, I could not tell friends from foes. No doubt their intention was not to kill or even rob us, or they would not have stopped to parley, and, moreover, they said all would be well if we returned to Hisarak; but, strange to say, the Naib, although he was in reality quite powerless, would not hear of our doing so, apparently believing that the men were acting without orders from their khan. His obstinacy

nearly proved fatal, as more than once a man, who appeared to be a ruling spirit amongst them, called on his men to separate themselves from us in order to attack us, and even drew his knife in his excitement. For two or three hours this went on, and several times I thought that nothing could avert an attack, which, as they were at least four to one (even supposing our escort to fight for us, which I think was most doubtful), and entirely surrounded and commanded us, must have been fatal to every one of our small party. At last, through Stewart's efforts, a compromise was made, and we agreed to stay where we were whilst a man took a letter signed by Stewart and the Naib down to the Khan of Hisarak, stating our purpose and all the circumstances of our arrest. By this time the sun had set, and we selected the best place we could, and got out some cold provisions we had brought with us, which we were glad enough of, as we had not had a really good meal all day. Our captors were now quiet enough and fairly civil, collecting firewood and sending for a sheep for our guard. Their general demeanour and gesture had been very insolent and overbearing, but no personal violence had been offered to Stewart or myself, nor did they attempt to disarm us ; at the same time they took good care that there should be no chance of rescue or escape, for the greater number of them sat in two large groups on either side of us, whilst I could see men on all the commanding rocks around us. Our guard took up their position on a high rock

some 150 or 200 yards away, the Naib and his servant alone remaining with us. After a long talk with those who seemed to be the most influential men, Stewart came to me and said he thought that there was no longer positive danger to our lives, but that there was little or no chance of our being allowed to go on the next day. We then lay down and slept for an hour or two.

“About midnight we were awakened by shouts, and were informed that fifteen or twenty men from Mangal had joined our escort, one of whom had managed to escape the evening before and give notice to his friends of what had occurred. By way of bravado, and to show, I suppose, how much they meant to do in the morning, they all commenced a war dance round a big fire. What with their shouts echoing down the valley and their great knives flashing in the firelight, it was altogether the most picturesque scene I ever saw.

“Almost immediately after, reinforcements from Hisarak began to come in and with them a cousin of Mahomed Shah, Mahomed Khan by name, who told Stewart that he must pack up and at once start for Hisarak without even waiting for daylight.

“We remonstrated on account of the badness of the road, but he was inexorable, and doubtless he was right, as by so doing all chance of a fight in the morning was put an end to.

“At about 2 A.M. we started on our return journey, Mahomed Khan being very cool and independent in

his manner, but not positively rude. He assured us that no harm should be done to us and that nothing should be taken from us; this, perhaps, he meant in good faith, but at all events his orders were not strictly attended to. Some of his followers were most insolent in their manners; their language I did not understand, but it was most difficult to keep one's temper. We had started on foot, our ponies and mules with the three servants followed behind, both out of sight in the darkness. When day broke we made some men who had coolly appropriated our ponies for their own use dismount, and then discovered that our holsters had been rifled. This did not look well for the rest of our traps, but it was no use remonstrating at that time.

“Our progress over the rocky path in the valley had been necessarily slow, and the sun had already risen by the time we reached the tent in the little plateau which we had passed the day before. Here we all halted for a short time, and sat down with Mahomed Khan until the whole party had assembled. Our bedding appeared outwardly to be all right, but some small things were reported as missing, amongst others my man's talwar which an Afghan had taken; fortunately he caught sight of the man as he was trying to move away, and the Khan made him give it up. We also mentioned our other losses, and were assured they should all be returned.

“After sitting here for ten minutes or more, and smoking a pipe of peace with the Khan, we pro-

ceeded on our way to Hisarak accompanied by a small escort only, the greater number of the men remaining behind at Mahomed Khan's tent. Those who went with us were quiet and civil, and we reached Mahomed Shah's Fort at Hisarak at about 6.30 A.M. on the 1st of June.

"We were led into the garden and were received there by the Khan, who advanced to meet us and conducted us on to a carpet spread under a magnificent plane tree, immediately over the broad stony bed of the Aozangani river and near its junction with the Surkhab river which flowed on the other side of the fort. The Khan was very civil, seating us on his right hand and making many apologies for any inconvenience or annoyance to which we may have been put; he added that had he received any instruction from the Amir to allow us to pass through his territory, that he would have taken every care of us, and seen that we reached Mangal in safety; even now he expressed himself as perfectly willing to forward us on as far as his district extended, should the Amir Yakub Khan, who was then at Gandamak, desire it. It was quickly decided that the Khan, on his part, should write for orders to the Amir, whilst Stewart wrote a brief account of what had occurred and asked for instructions under the altered state of affairs.

"A messenger was despatched with these letters at about 8 A.M., and we were assured that early in the afternoon he would return with the answers. The

Khan then sent for beds for us, and, ordering a large dish of rice and a roasted partridge with a great bowl of milk for our breakfast, left us to ourselves under the tree.

“ The first thing we did, when we were alone, was to overhaul our property and see what was missing. We soon discovered that everything had been opened and examined, and we each missed many small things, amongst others my plane-table ruler, compass and screw, and my note-book ;* the theodolite was, to my great relief, all right. Till about 4 P.M. the Khan considerably left us quite to ourselves, and we were enabled to get a most refreshing sleep and enjoy peace and quietness after the excitement of the previous twelve hours. On his return he was accompanied by only a few of his followers, and we all sat down together, Stewart carrying on a long conversation with him. A hookah was constantly passed round, always commencing with us and then being taken to the Khan and his followers in succession. Mulberries, and little bits of roast meat on wooden skewers, were handed to us. A little before sunset Mahomed Shah and ourselves adjourned to a small mosque outside the fort walls, where we found three travellers who were on their way from Herat to Gandamak to see the Amir; one was the chief civil Magistrate of Herat, and the other two were his

* My note-book and the ruler with its brass sights wrenched off were afterwards returned to me.

attendants. The mosque was a small wooden edifice without any attempt at beauty in itself, but prettily situated over some vineyards and looking on to the Surkhab river and its broad bed. Here we all had tea together and the Mahomedans said their evening prayers, after which we adjourned to the fort, and we were shown to our quarters for the night over the principal gateway. As soon as we had finished our dinner, which consisted of another dish of rice and meat, the Khan paid us a last visit to see that we were comfortable, and then left us for the night.

“Early the next morning the Khan came in to say that the messengers had returned bringing a letter from the Amir to him, but no answer for us. He said his letter instructed him to allow us to proceed, but, judging by his manner, he did not seem to be quite so willing to help us now as he had professed himself to be the day before; still he did not refuse to do so.

“Being quite at a loss to guess why there was no answer to our letter asking for orders, we begged for a little time to consult together before deciding on what we should do. Our position was a very awkward one. It should be borne in mind that we had started with a guard of Asmatoolah Khan's, headed by an influential man of his; that whilst under his protection a rival khan, Mahomed Shah, had forcibly stopped us and taken us *nolens volens* to his fort. This was in itself quite sufficient to cause a deadly feud between

the two khans and their followers.* Our original guard had disappeared, the Naib and his personal servant, who had been looted of all he possessed, alone remaining with us. No doubt Mahomed Shah could, if he chose, escort us safely as far as the borders of his own territory, but then how were we to proceed? Again, in order to conduct safely such an expedition as ours, at best a somewhat risky one, through such a fanatical tribe as that of the Ghilzais, rapidity of movement and secrecy were almost essential. By this time, of course, rumours of our attempt and failure must have spread all along the route, and our chance of reaching the Lakarai pass greatly diminished. It is true we now had, what we should have had to start with, a safe conduct from the Amir himself, but we had no fresh orders, and not even proof that our letter explaining the altered position of affairs had reached its destination. Indeed, we both agreed that our letter must have been either burked or lost, for in no other way could we account for Sir L. Cavagnari's silence. The result of our consultation was that we decided on returning to Gandamak ourselves at once. Our reasons for not staying where we were and sending another messenger were twofold; one was that, under the circumstances, we by no means enjoyed our position as guests of

* On our arrival at Gandamak, we heard that Asmatoollah, on being told of what had occurred, begged for leave to attack Mahomed Shah, declaring he would raze his fort to the ground.

Mahomed Shah, and another was that the loss of my instruments rendered a survey of the route almost impracticable ; these I could replace if I returned to Gandamak. Loath as we were to go back without accomplishing anything, we neither of us felt that it would be right to make a fresh attempt without orders. The Khan seemed somewhat relieved when he heard of our decision, and said he thought we were doing right ; so after another dish of rice and meat we left the place. Our host accompanied us as far as the borders of his territory, and then bade us good-bye, sending a small escort to take care of us into camp. It was late in the afternoon when we arrived, and we rode straight up to Sir L. Cavagnari's tent and had an interview with him. He expressed great surprise at seeing us, and on our explaining the reasons which had induced us to give up the expedition, he said he had received our letter and had asked Yakub Khan to send us a safe conduct, and that he considered that was quite a sufficient answer, and that we ought to have acted on it. It was most unfortunate that we had not also considered it so, for by this time we might have almost reached Alikhel ; but I still think that we decided rightly in returning. We at once volunteered to start again early the next morning ; but as some of our troops had already left for India, it was feared that small detached parties might be cut up, and that it would not be safe for us to make another attempt, and so the idea of reconnoitring the route was finally abandoned.

“The above is not from recollection, but from my notes written partly whilst detained at Hisarak, and finished immediately after at Gandamak. I have made light of the behaviour of the men when they first stopped us, but I can assure you it was anything but a pleasant time. For instance, when Stewart and I first rejoined the mules, the Afghan who was trying to disarm one of our men caught Stewart by the beard and tried to make him repeat the Mahomedan creed, and then turned round and did the same to me. Another time, when I was on the outskirts of the little crowd, of which Stewart and the Naib formed the centre, a man knelt down and presented his jezzail at me from about five yards, coolly blowing up his match at the same time. As long as friends and foes were mixed up arguing, there was but little chance of the jezzailchis, of whom there were several, opening fire ; but when the leader, a man who, at any rate, did most of the talking, drew his knife and commenced to separate himself from us and call on the others to do so too, I must say that I thought it was all up. Again, in the night, or rather in the early morning, when we were preparing to start, I had just done up my bundle of bedding when it was snatched out of my hands and whipped off into the crowd, at which there was a laugh. I thought I had seen the last of it, but presently another man returned it. Still, as I have said, everything was searched, and small portable things were stolen.

“Before we had mounted our ponies, one of the men

rode past me on the narrow path so rudely as to force me out of his way, and I should have fallen had it not been for a rock, on which I sat down. All this was very hard to bear, but it was useless to remonstrate, and I firmly believe that had we used our arms we should at once have been murdered. Although they did not disarm us, they looked very carefully after us, for when we got into the comparatively open ground on the top of the spur, I left the path for about two or three yards so as to get up abreast of Stewart, and at once a man placed himself beyond me and motioned me back again, which, however, I did not attend to. When once we reached Hisarak we were treated civilly enough, and I have no doubt, had proper arrangements been made in the first instance with Mahomed Shah, that we should have gone through without difficulty."

The attempt to examine this important route having failed, and no other opportunity to explore it having been offered to the survey officers, it is still unknown to us, except from hearsay evidence gleaned from native sources. Seen from Gandamak, the route would seem to appear far more difficult than it really is ; but distant views of mountain paths are often deceptive.

To return to my own narrative. The day following our arrival at Bian Khel, the General rode to Ali Khel, distance six miles—the road a track following the right bank of the stream. The gar-

rison of Ali Khel, the future rendezvous of our army, was composed of the 28th Punjab Native Infantry, under the Command of Colonel Hudson. Here, too, resided Captain Rennick, a political officer of much courage and determination, and an accomplished Persian scholar. Shortly after the capture of the Peiwar Kotul, Captain Rennick, with a small guard of about thirty sepoy, went to reside in Ali Khel, our most advanced post, thirteen miles from the Peiwar Kotul. The road in winter lies deep in snow, and often is all but impassable, besides being infested by robbers and murderers. On one occasion upwards of 2,000 Mongols, a tribe hostile to the Jagis who occupy the Huriab, came down to kill or expel him, but for some unexplained reason they passed Ali Khel on the opposite bank of the stream. On another occasion, when riding alone, a fanatic drew his knife from the scabbard; but Rennick, without showing alarm, drew forth his revolver, and his baulked assassin sullenly sheathed his weapon and left the village. His quarters consisted of the upper story of an antiquated house reached by a dingy staircase, and used afterwards, in more peaceful times, as a hospital. In this smoky den he lived, and fed, and cooked his food. At night a sentry paced the room inside, as the treasure box had to be kept there, and the sepoy was safe from stray bullets. After the General had visited Rennick in his den we rode to inspect the plateaux, half a mile beyond the village, where fatigue parties of the 28th Native Infantry were engaged in levelling the ground

and constructing a dam to collect the rain-fall. While riding home the General told me how in his rapid advance towards the Shutargardan with a small flying column, the road was then strewn with arms, baggage, and every description of article, the enemy having abandoned everything in his eagerness to escape. Indeed, the Afghans made no halt short of Kushi, in the Logar valley, at least fifty miles from the Peiwar heights.

About sunset that evening Rennick rode up the hill to our camp, his pistol in one hand, and a letter in the other containing some important news for General Roberts. The pistol really was quite a necessity. During the same night Lieutenant Spence, of the Commissariat Department, had a narrow escape of his life while sleeping in his tent at Ali Khel. A ruffian crept up within a few yards of the tents and fired some big slugs at the position he thought Spence would be occupying, and the latter narrowly escaped the intended compliment, one or more slugs passing through the coat hanging on his tent-pole, and the other through the tent just over his head. The sentry close at hand was unloaded, and the man escaped. The same or some other ruffian visited our camp at Bian Khel on the following night, his object this time being a Sikh sentry. Creeping slowly up the shady side of a ridge on which the sentry was standing motionless in the bright moonlight, he fired with so true an aim that the ball passed fairly through the centre of the man's puggery, or head-dress, just grazing his

head. This ruffian also made good his escape in the numerous ravines close by.

Shooting at night was rather a favourite pastime among the inhabitants of the Huriab. A friendly Jagi, who used to sell vegetables in camp at Ali Khel, was caught deliberately pacing the distance from the end of a sentry-walk at night to a point where he had prepared a small screen of bushes behind which he might safely shoot down the unwary soldier; and, as a rule, up to 100 yards these men made very good shooting with their jazails or long-barrelled rifles.

On the 7th April 1879 our camp was again struck; the General returned to Kuram, halting at Habib-killa. On reaching the telegraph office at the Peiwar Kotul he received a message informing him of General Charles Gough's (who commanded a brigade under Sir S. Brown) victory over the Khugians at Futteabad, the completeness of the victory being only marred by the death of a popular and gallant soldier, Major Wigram Battye, of the Corps of Guides, who was killed while leading a cavalry charge in the midst of the enemy. The General was much affected at hearing of his death. Few soldiers in the native army obtained the love and confidence of their men in the way that Wigram Battye did, more especially of the Sikhs, whose squadron he was leading at the time of his death. A writer in *Blackwood* touchingly describes this: "Death must have been instantaneous after the second shot, for the ball had gone through his heart. His face was pale, but its expression had

nothing of pain in it. He lived only for his profession, and nothing can be more fitting than to die also for what we have lived for. The men stood in groups around his tent, many of them crying like children ; they said but little, but I overheard one remark : ‘ Why were we not all killed instead of him ? for there are thousands like us, but not in all the world such another as he.’ ” Major Battye belonged to a column the movements of which are not described in this narrative, but the touching account of the death of so brave a soldier must be read by all with interest.

The road from the summit of the Peiwar towards Kuram was rapidly being made by the 8th Foot, and a stupendous work it was, for a more difficult track than that which existed at the time of its capture can hardly be imagined. The absence of proper roads is one of the characteristic features of Afghanistan. It would appear to be the object of the people never to remove any obstacle to traffic which nature has placed in the way, so that all obstructions that can oppose or hinder the advance of an enemy or a foreigner may remain. It is very probable that the splendid roadway since made between the Peiwar Kotul and Ali Khel, as well as its continuation to the Shutargardan, if not actually destroyed, will never be repaired. Even in 1879 portions of the new road were being constantly washed away by the carelessness and apathy of the people in allowing the water-cuts to flood it.

When halted at Habibkilla a few of us went out chikore-shooting in the lower adjoining hills, but our powder was not straight, and the bag in consequence small, while many wounded birds escaped, for they are very difficult to catch without a dog. The chikore is a handsome bird, very much resembling a French partridge; he seems to delight in arid and desolate spots, and barren stony hill-sides where few other birds appear to enjoy life. In Cashmere and Gilgit it is met with at great heights in the summer, on the same ground as that occupied by markhor and ibex. In the early morning and evening the cluck—ck—ck—ck of the cock bird, standing on a prominent stone and challenging his mate, is heard at some distance; while the shrill piercing whistle of fear which he utters when flying, with outstretched neck and motionless extended wings, often startles the wary sportsman intent on watching bigger game, and as often warns the game itself that some disturbing element is at hand.

A halt of three weeks was made by the General at Kuram, the time being fully occupied in forwarding troops and in completing the necessary commissariat and transport arrangements. The local supplies of the country were insufficient to feed the large force assembling on the border, and provisions were forwarded in large quantities from the bases, Kuram, Thull, Kohat. The carriage used between Thull and Kohat was chiefly local. The Turis—the tribe inhabiting the Kuram valley, must have earned large

sums of money, as the chief transport animal used, the donkey, costs little to keep, while his master considerably increased his gains by abstracting part of the load and adding stones and earth to make up the weight. Many sacks, when opened in Ali Khel, were found adulterated in this way.

During the winter fair sport is obtained with the gun at Kuram amongst the duck and snipe. Duck-shooting is evidently practised by the Turis. On many small ponds and shallows, left in the river after the water has subsided, are numbers of decoy ducks. These are simply made of mud, shaped somewhat like a duck, a small white stone forming the bill. They are placed in the shallows where ducks delight to feed, raised slightly above the water by stones placed underneath. So exactly in the distance, and in certain lights, do these decoys look like real ducks, that I know of one good sportsman who fired both barrels in a lot, and once a Highland officer and I made a most careful stalk up to forty yards, and were only undeceived by the tittering of some villagers in the roof of a house near. Numbers of hares and sand-grouse were shot on the plains beyond Kuram, on the left bank of the river. The river itself is, as a rule, fordable all the year round, and the water is generally clear, though it becomes very red and muddy after heavy rain. Fair sport was obtained with the rod. On the right bank, about two miles below Kuram, are some beautiful pools, from which many fish were taken, the largest mahseer landed weighing 18lbs.

Pine logs are floated in considerable quantity down the river separately or in rafts.

On the low hills, on the opposite bank of the river, the urial, or mountain sheep, lives; a few specimens were shot in the summer of 1879 by officers who obtained leave. The markhor, mountain goat, the ibex, black bear, manal, or jungle pheasants, are found on the hills to the north of Kuram, and on the Sufaid Koh range. The markhor and ibex horns are set up over the entrances and roofs of the principal musjids. The pheasants are caught by the villagers in pit-traps set on the high ridges amongst the pine trees. In one day I came across three of these traps. Many specimens of this bird were brought in alive to Kuram.

The winter climate of Kuram is severe, owing chiefly to an intensely cold wind which blows down the valley, and, though snow sometimes falls, it rarely lies.

In April two distinguished regiments marched through Kuram to the front, the 92nd Gordon Highlanders and the 67th Foot, which latter arrived from the Madras territory.

Towards the end of April, in spite of the elevation above the sea of Kuram, the hot weather began to set in, and we were all glad, on the 29th, when our camp was struck for Ali Khel. Again we passed over the Peiwar Kotul, from which the snow had quite disappeared, while the road between it and Ali Khel was nearly completed. The 67th Foot,

the 11th Native Infantry, were busy making themselves comfortable at the ridges at Bian Khel, a post necessary to keep in check the tribe of Mongols. Riding along, I was frequently asked, "What is the news?"—for anyone connected with the Head-quarters camp was supposed to know everything that was about to take place—"Are we going on to Kabul, or are we not?" Everything on our side portended an advance; but in the meantime Cavagnari and Jenkyns were drafting a treaty which was to delay our advance, and the carrying out of one of whose clauses they little thought was to prove fatal to themselves and their followers. As the summer was advancing and nothing settled, we most of us made up our minds to make the best of the place, as, owing to the increasing heat, if we did not advance we should hardly be withdrawn to the rear.

On the 1st of May my duties with the Staff were ended; I took over medical charge of the 5th Goorkhas, then quartered in Ali Khel. Three large plateaux known as A B and C, separated by ravines, and covering nearly two square miles of ground, formed the camping-ground of Ali Khel. Of these only B and C were permanently occupied, A being used only for extra troops. The Huriab stream flowed by the side of plateau C, emptying into the Hazar Darakt stream, which swept along the north of all the plateaux, both uniting to form the river Kuram, which eventually flows into the Indus, making its exit from the Waziri hills by a gorge above the

station of Edwardesabad. Out of musket-range from the neighbouring hills, commanding in its southern aspect the opening of the Hazar Darakt valley, with strong stone walls and abattis sweeping the approaches, the position on three sides was very strong, unless exposed to artillery-fire. A long ridge of hills, some hundred feet high, ran along the rear of the plateaux, which was partly entrenched, and commanded the village of Ali Khel and weak points, while the approaches on this side were guarded with strong block-towers. Half a mile from this ridge, prettily hidden amongst willows and orchards of fruit-trees, lay the village itself; while, from the ridge, the eye travelled back over the fertile plains of the Huriab, the cultivation extending to the slopes of the Peiwar heights, covered with dark masses of pines, and showing out well the towering mountain Sika Ram, whose sides were now covered with snow, which did not quite disappear until the end of June.

Hemmed in on all sides by hills, occupied on one side by Mongols, a tribe hostile to ourselves as well as the Jagis (the tribe occupying the Huriab), and on the other by Ghilzais, life and exercise were somewhat dull and confined in our camp, for strict orders limited the boundary of our walks from camp.

The General, however, determined that the country should be carefully mapped out, and several reconnaissances were made by small bodies of infantry, accompanied by an officer of the Survey and Quartermaster-General's Department. I was allowed to

accompany the first of these parties, composed of two companies of the 5th Goorkhas. Our line of survey ran from the Peiwar Kotul, through the hills overlooking Mongol territory, and covered some eighteen miles of country, so that, though we started at daybreak, Ali Khel was not reached until 7 P.M. In all this long detour we met with only one or two individuals, and saw hardly any habitations or cultivation, the hills being covered with dense forests, but offering some perfect scenery. When descending a beautiful glade, our staff officer pointed out with delight a new variety of fish, floating about in a clear pool of melted snow, the elevation being 9,000 feet. This curiosity, thought by some of us to be a new variety of leech, was carefully deposited in a bottle, and three specimens were brought to camp. In shape it resembled a leech, in substance a jelly-fish, while the interior contained small dark objects like pepper-corns. It was hoped that a new variety of fish at a high elevation had been discovered, a new polyoptus for the Calcutta Museum from the Kuram valley. The specimen, however, was never sent to Calcutta, for, cruel to state, some wag affirmed it was only toad-spawn.

A second reconnaissance, to survey the heights above the Mangyar pass, was made by Major Woodthorpe and Captain Martin, who were accompanied by a few officers fond of climbing. On the same morning some sections of an important tribe who had long resisted our offers of friendship, the Hussain Khels, arrived

to make their submission to the Political Officer. Woodthorpe's party in the meantime reached their point, some seven miles distant and in heliographic communication with our camp. Now, unanimity in thought and action—except, probably, in murder—is not a prominent feature of the Afghan character, and while some of the sections wended their way to the tent of our Political Officer, one or more turned in the tracks of Woodthorpe's party on the heights, whilst a few of the bolder spirits attacked some of our wood-cutters working close to camp under a small Goorkha guard. Those who turned their steps towards Woodthorpe were observed by him, and a message arrived from him saying that a number of men were seen about, evidently for no good purpose. His heliograph then suddenly stopped working, while at the same time the rattle of the jazail and several puffs of smoke, heard and seen coming from the woods, opposite our camp and within 1,000 yards, showed that our wished-for adherents were annoying our wood-cutters, and unmistakably demonstrating their feelings as regarded the deputation then sitting in our camp, and the objection their particular section had to it. Their comrades will, after all, bring them home loongies and rupees, and they, too, may possibly have heard that amongst ourselves are Lawsons and others who have pity on their unsociable acts, and call our merciful kindness atrocities. However, on this occasion the lives of several gallant officers were in jeopardy, and, after a hurried apology

to the sections in camp, two regiments were despatched to the "relief of Woodthorpe."

Both rapidly crossed the Huriab, and while one, the 28th Native Infantry, acted as a support, the other, the 5th Goorkhas, marched rapidly for the base of the hills on which Woodthorpe and his party were partly surrounded and defending themselves with their rifles, for the Afghans were boldly trying to cut them off. As the green uniforms of the Goorkhas showed out on the lower slopes, the Mongols or Hussain Khels retired amongst the trees, and, having recovered Woodthorpe, we marched back triumphantly without killing anyone.

Several other reconnaissances were made in different directions, the largest force being taken to the Hussain Khel country, composed of British and Native infantry and artillery, and accompanied by General Roberts and his staff. From the heights above Hussain Khel it was hoped that a view of the Logar valley might be obtained, and perhaps an alternate route to the Shutargardan ascertained; but the political aspect of the people did not permit of this idea being carried out, although a great deal of new country was mapped out. Our only casualty on this occasion happened to Colonel Gordon, C.S.I., Chief Political Officer, whose Yarkund pony crossed his leg when descending a ravine, and rolling heavily with his rider, caused a broken collar-bone.

The last expedition in this direction was made by the 5th Goorkhas, their object being to surprise a

village a few miles down the river, where some unfriendly Mongols had taken shelter for the night. These unfriendly Mongols had robbed some friendly Mongols, or adherents, of the loongies and clothing bestowed on them as a reward by our Political Officer. Silently in the darkness we descended from our plateau, crossed the Hazar stream, and marched up a side hillock, which eventually led into the suspected village. As day broke, the troops cautiously approached, and the village was so carefully surrounded that few could have escaped. But all to no purpose. Our unfriendly Mongols had left the day before, and we marched back to camp with a keen appetite for breakfast. These reconnaissances, while they enabled important additions to be made to our geographical knowledge of the country without danger, were of use in keeping the troops in health and exercise, and in breaking the monotony of ordinary camp life and routine.

The high mountain, "Martungai," 13,500 feet, was visited by several parties of officers, its ascent and descent occupying a long day, and causing some fatigue, which the grand and extensive view obtained from its summit well repaid. The view of snowy peaks, visible at so great a distance as 150 miles, was the chief point of interest, as we all thought them to belong to the Hindu Kush. Since my return from Afghanistan, from information received, I think a mistake was committed in calling these peaks the Hindu Kush, and that they most probably were

the peaks of Faraj-gan Tagao, mountains rising to 15,000 feet, intervening between the point of view and the great range. The nearer view from the mountain showed a wavy panorama of hills and peaks visible on all sides, the brown, hot Kuram valley showing itself at a great distance over the Peiwar Kotul. The Shutargardan pass itself is hidden in the peaks which surround it, from the summit of which and Martungai heliographic communication was kept up with the pass and Ali Khel during our advance on Kabul in 1879. Intervening peaks and hills quite hide the Logar valley.

My own ascent was made with another medical officer and a small Goorkha guard. On the summit we ate our lunch and quenched a raging thirst with melted snow, of which only a small quantity remained. Many and beautiful varieties of flowers were met with in the higher slopes and up to within 600 feet of the summit. During our descent towards Ali Khel we discovered a manal, or hill-pheasant, in a shady nullah. Our guide immediately seated himself behind some bushes, and so perfectly imitated the call of the bird, that several others answered and showed themselves. On the lower slopes I came across several hares. When half way down we lost our way, and then found the descent most tedious and difficult; one of the Goorkhas, who are good climbers, fell at a dry waterfall and cut his head open; while we all suffered very severely from thirst, as we could find no water between the summit and the base.

At the end of May 1879 an opportunity was offered me of accompanying a small party of officers, under our Political Officer, Colonel Gordon, C.S.I., who were about to visit the Shutargardan pass. This pass—seen only by a few of the force—was always a great point of interest. The expedition was made with the hope that we might meet the son of the Padshah Khan, a great Ghilzai chief who had severely taxed General Roberts' patience by want of politeness in answering letters, and also that, perhaps, an alternative route to the Shutargardan, or one by which it could be turned, might be discovered.

At early dawn our party, consisting of Colonel Gordon, Captains Rennick, Spratt, Woodthorpe, Martin, Carr, Manners-Smith, and myself, left camp with very light baggage, consisting only of bedding carried on mules. Our road followed the course of the Hazar Darakt stream—which had to be forded several times, and the water of which was intensely cold—as far as the village of Rokian, five miles. From Rokian to Drekullah, a very small village, is four miles, the road frequently crossing and recrossing the stream. During the last two miles the cliffs draw in and become precipitous on each side. Above Drekullah, some half a mile from the stream, the cliffs, composed of sandstone loam, assume most fantastic shapes and pillar formations, one more particularly so, which represented for a long distance on the sky-line the form of a huge giant guarding the entrance to the gloomy Hazar Darakt defile. At Drekullah the

road turns sharp to the left, and the Hazar Darakt defile is entered. The road now becomes more difficult and stony. Defile is a word hardly applicable to Hazar Darakt, as it implies an extremely narrow pass, for here the cliffs rather diverge than converge at their summits. There is, however, something particularly melancholy and chilling about this spot. For miles hardly any signs of animal life were seen, and the birds we saw we could count on our fingers. The hill-sides, too, were mostly barren, and the pine trees had been ruthlessly cut down, the numerous stumps and dead trunks lying irregularly, helping to make the scene more bleak and uncomfortable. This destruction of the forests occurred during the reign of Shere Ali, the trunks being used to roof-in the huge barracks he commenced at Sherpur. They were cut down and conveyed to Kabul by thousands of Hazara coolies during the summer months.

At Jagithanna, an old deserted fort, we halted to breakfast and to feed our horses, and then slowly rode on to Karatiga. Karatiga was another deserted fort, but in better condition and built on some flat high ground opposite the entrance of a large nullah. The Hazar Darakt defile ends a mile or so beyond Karatiga. With the exception of these two forts, a few small patches of ground which are cultivated in the summer, and one or two old watch-towers, no other signs of human habitations were visible. Beyond Karatiga we found the road very stony and difficult for horses, and after about a mile and a half

a sharp turn to the right is made, and a very steep zig-zag ascent of over 200 feet, at which we had to dismount, brought us to the top of the Soorkai, or Red Kotul, on the summit of which is a solitary block-tower. The hills about this point are justly called red, for they are composed of dusky red sandstone. After winding through some low hills the aspect of the country changes, and the road suddenly opens out on a grassy plain of considerable extent, surrounded by low hills. This plain is quite a relief to the eye, and we unanimously exclaimed, "What a grand place for cricket and polo this would be!" for both these games were sadly missed at Ali Khel.

Leaving this plain on the right, the road turns now to the left and west, leaving the fort of Kasim Khel on the right, and follows the course of a small rivulet running between low hills, and, after a slow and easy ascent of two and a half miles, opens on the Shutargardan pass.

Kasim Khel fort completely commands the road leading to the pass, and it is, therefore, of much importance. We found it occupied by Ghilzais with their families and flocks. A short halt was made at this fort, for the weather looked very threatening in the direction of the Shutargardan, over which black masses of clouds were chasing each other, but we could not afford to delay, as the news of our arrival would be sure to spread, and we had no better guard than the usual Badragga, composed of natives

of Ali Khel. Leaving our tired horses behind, we pushed on rapidly on foot. The ascent is very gradual, hardly more than 500 feet in $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles.

The pass itself is not visible until close at hand, owing to a small projecting hill round which the road turns. It is commanded by an old circular watch-tower. Its height is about 10,500 feet, although it was originally thought to be much higher. One hundred yards beyond the summit is a comparatively level plateau 200 square yards in extent, and from this point the road descends in a most precipitous manner. Heavy masses of clouds hung over the pass, partly obscuring the Logar valley seen some sixteen miles distant. The smoke of the villages, slowly curling upwards, was distinctly visible with glasses. Hideous layers of dry, brown, and almost treeless hills and peaks intervene, and the view, though extensive, is disappointing. The higher peaks above the pass, running up to 12,000 feet, shut in the sides, and the almost total absence of trees mars the general aspect. The hills on the far side of the Logar, which we afterwards knew were above Zahidabad, are seen in front; but Kabul itself and the hills around it are completely hidden by intervening side spurs and shoots overlooking Charasiab.

The defile, some 2,000 feet below, through which the road runs to Kushi, was enlivened by green cultivation around some scattered villages, and an old fort was distinctly visible on a small plateau on the left of the defile, nearly opposite the Shinkai, or

White Kotul. Scarcely had we made ourselves comfortable to survey this long-anticipated scene, and whilst the theodolites of the survey officers were rapidly running off various angles, our political officer ordered us to retire.

Although our party had exposed themselves as little as possible, we had been observed from below, and Padshah Khan sent up word that he disapproved of our overlooking his dominions, as he had sent us no invitation. We therefore had to return gracefully to the fort at Kasim Khel, which was reached before sunset.

The fort of Kasim Khel is small, and comfortably accommodated the Ghilzai families inside ; but the addition of our party, our Ali Khel guard, with our eight horses, for we dare not picket them outside, caused considerable overcrowding. Our party were, I believe, the first Europeans that had passed a night in this fort, and we and our arms were duly criticised. I watched one Badragga chief, thinking himself unobserved, take up a Martini-Henry rifle belonging to Captain Martin, and drawing a Ghilzai friend aside, he rapidly closed and opened the breech of the weapon, pulled the trigger, nodding his head to his friend significantly, as much as to say, Now that the action of the weapon has been explained it will be worth stealing. We then proceeded to open out our bedding and to spread out our cold dinner, six of us having to pack in a small room, while an adjoining cupboard, half-full of straw, was occupied

by two sepoy. Colonel Gordon shared a small room with Rennick, who prepared for him a savoury dish, at the expense of a good deal of smoke, for the room had no chimney. As smoke always ascends, the only way to avoid its painful effects on the eyes is to lie as flat on the floor as possible.

On the following day we all rose at daybreak. Our baggage was despatched with a small guard by the same road as that by which it had arrived. We then struck off a fresh road across the Kasim Khel plain in a due east direction, and crossed a small kotul, which led into a second grassy plain beyond, nearly a square mile in area. At the extreme left of this plain was a small village built of intensely red sandstone soil, from which the sun glared horribly. Here we separated, Colonel Gordon and the rest of the party going straight onwards to explore the Gogyza route, which finally opened out at Drekullah, nine miles from Ali Khel; while Captain Spratt, R.E., and I turned across the plain, following the route leaving its right-hand corner. Our road was to take us over the Thabi pass, which opened eventually into the Hazar Darakt defile, two miles on the Ali Khel side of Karatiga fort.

Shortly after leaving the plain we found the track, which followed a watercourse, exceedingly difficult and rocky, and utterly impossible to ride over, our horses having to get over huge boulders of rock. We slowly ascended until the path opened out on a small hollow plain surrounded by peaks on which

snow was then lying. The final ascent to the top of the pass was very steep and difficult. The summit of the Thabi pass is over 10,000 feet high, and the descent on the Ali Khel side very steep and precipitous.

A huge square rock marks the opening of the road into the Hazar Darakt defile, the distance from the summit of the pass being about three miles. Near the end of the nullah we found marks of cultivation and a diverted water-channel, but no habitations. We ate our lunch in the Jagithanna fort, which is commanded front and rear by the hills on each side of the defile, one or two of the guards keeping a look-out. Suddenly a shot, heard some distance below, answered by two close at hand, fired by our friends, made us jump, and we ran to the walls to look over, but could see nothing but two horsemen riding away. These turned out to be two sowars of the Ameer's army deserting to our force at Ali Khel. They refused to stop when passing the fort, and, our Badragga chasing, they rode hard away, one of them firing off his rifle while doing so, on which our guard returned the compliment. From Jagithanna we had to walk nearly the whole distance to Ali Khel (sixteen miles), for my horse had cast two shoes, and was dead lame. We reached Ali Khel at sunset, a heavy shower drenching us to the skin just before reaching the plateaux.

Colonel Gordon's party had found their route more suitable for man and beast, and reached camp some

hours before us. Neither of these routes were afterwards used by our troops.

The disposition of the troops at Ali Khel during the summer months was as follows :—

Plateau C.—72nd Highlanders, 5th Goorkhas, 23rd Pioneers, 28th Punjab Native Infantry, the Head-quarters camp. The 23rd and 28th afterwards marched, respectively, to Shalufzan and Kuram.

Plateau B.—92nd Highlanders, Derajat Mountain Battery, Field Artillery, Royal Horse Artillery, which latter eventually returned to Shalufzan.

General Roberts' cavalry and artillery were located in the Kuram valley, on account of the very limited supply of grass procurable in the Huriab valley.

The 67th Foot occupied Bian Khel, the fort midway between Peiwar Kotal and Ali Khel, while the 8th Foot guarded the Peiwar Kotal itself.

Before the signing of the Gundamuck treaty, a grand review was held, to show the natives our teeth and our strength, at which the General presented the Victoria Cross to Captain John Cook, of the 5th Goorkhas, for gallantry displayed on the Peiwar heights, as well as to some non-commissioned officers and men of the same corps.

The second review, held in honour of the Queen's birthday, was a very grand affair, most of the cavalry and artillery in the Kuram valley being present.

A horse show, the first of its kind in Afghanistan, was held under the management of Major Tigncombe, a popular officer of the 72nd. In this General

Roberts' handsome Arab carried off the blue ribbon for chargers. Athletic sports, frequently held, called forth considerable rivalry between camps in the different plateaux, while, in the colder weather, open-air concerts around a huge bon-fire were attended and enjoyed by all ranks.

Our neighbours the Jagis, who inhabited the Huriab proper, found a great friend and protector in General Roberts, who erred, if anything, too much on the side of kindness. Besides receiving high rates for supplies and transport, ample reparation was invariably given for the slightest encroachment on their lands and fields when carrying out the road to Ali Khel, and if their watercourses were at all interfered with they were carefully set up in another position. Any damage to trees or houses was liberally paid for, while we in the end presented them with a splendid roadway of thirteen miles, where only a miserable track had before existed.

The behaviour of our troops, both British and native, was beyond all praise, nor do I believe a single charge of oppression or wrong was ever raised against them. The speech of one of our political agitators, copied from the "Times," which I read at Ali Khel one day in my tent, in which he stated that "the atrocities committed by our troops and by us in the Afghan war, would not bear mention," or language equivalent to this, is, therefore, as untrue as it was unmanly. If, as is well known, the behaviour of our troops at Ali Khel was without fault,

and if the evidence of General Sir D. Stewart, then chief of the army at Candahar and now Commander-in-Chief in India, is correct, viz. that during his tenure of command at Candahar and on the march from Candahar to Kabul only two instances of misbehaviour had been brought to his notice in a space of two years, then is the baseness and falsehood of such a statement shown, and an ample apology should be made to the soldier who has been maligned, and who, by his marvellously good behaviour, has, in time of war and peace, honourably upheld the good name of the British army before the people of Afghanistan, as far as he is concerned. With our half-hearted policy, of course, he has nothing to do.

Such statements as these, being absolutely without foundation, are made generally to serve party interests, have a bad effect on the easily-deceived British public, and are therefore most unpatriotic and disloyal. So easily were some good people in Scotland deluded by these misrepresentations, that the "United Presbyterian Presbytery of Edinburgh passed a 'unanimous resolution' that a memorial be transmitted to Her Majesty, entreating her to exercise her authority to put a stop to the atrocities which are being perpetrated in Afghanistan." The eloquent writer in "Blackwood" who quotes this, continues: "So far from having formed the theatre of 'atrocities,' or even of severity on any large or general scale, Afghanistan has been treated, ever

since our army entered it in September last, with a consideration as rare, in the face of provocation like ours, as it may have been suggestive of weakness and timidity." There are large bodies among our countrymen, however, who may easily be misled by the agitation which has been got up on this subject; it is, therefore, deeply to be regretted that men, honest enough in all the relations of private life, should have suffered party ambition to blind them to what is due to the statesmen and soldiers who, during a period of exceptional danger and difficulty, have been doing so much to strengthen the foundations of the Empire, and advance the power of England.

The Jagi, then, certainly had no cause for complaint, and his physical ailments were always attended to, either in the European hospital, the village dispensary, or in his own homestead. Retaliation for injuries and losses inflicted was, however, not allowed them, and this they could hardly understand.

I was once treating an old Jagi, severely wounded by the Mongols, whose infirm wife asked me, when going away, for a cure for rheumatism. I pointed towards the village hospital a mile away, and said if she would come she should receive relief. She shrugged her shoulders and said, "The Mongols, who have wounded my husband, have taken away my mule, and I cannot walk." Yet on this particular occasion, in which many friendly Jagis had been wounded and their property carried off, we would

neither avenge them on the Mongols ourselves, nor would we allow them to do so.

Disputes about land often cause bloodshed, and the most ghastly wounds, for their knives are always as keen as razors. The treatment they adopt in a severe wound is peculiar. The sufferer is placed in a dark and generally under-ground room, to which no ray of daylight is admitted. The flickering light of a pine-torch, the smoke of which is considered to have healthy properties, only is allowed. The wound itself is sewn up like a sack with coarse string made of goat's hair, and a large piece of fresh sheepskin is bound over all. Under this treatment the most severe wounds frequently heal. Their gratitude for kindness was shown to me in the presents of eggs, fruit, and milk, which two latter I always accepted.

Several officers accompanied me in these expeditions, as the General insisted that no officer must leave camp alone. My most desperately wounded patient resided in the village of Rokian. He had received terrible gashes in the back, one of which divided his ribs; yet he eventually recovered. A land quarrel was the cause. One rising Q.M.G. officer gave me much assistance, not only by his knowledge of Persian, but by help in sewing wounds and applying splints. There are few parts and villages of the Huriab valley that we have not explored together.

CHAPTER II.

The Gundamuck Treaty.—Sir L. Cavagnari goes to Kabul.—Cavagnari at the Shutargardan.—Ten Days' Leave on the Peiwar.—Peiwar Kotul in August 1879.—Climate.—Absence of Ferns.—Mount Sika Ram.—Kuram in August 1879.—Storm.—The Rush.—The Camel.—Shooting a Camel.

IN the month of May an important and direful event occurred in British history, the signing of the Gundamuck Treaty, which eventually brought Sir Louis Cavagnari to Ali Khel, on his way to take up our Ambassadorship at Kabul. The death* of the Amir Sher Ali, in Turkestan, whither he had fled with his

* "Shere Ali died of mortification of the leg. This, it is said, might have been prevented or cured, but for the jealousy of the Afghan doctors, and the impracticable temper of the illustrious patient himself. When at last it became a question of life or limb, the unfortunate Prince agreed with native opinion, that an amir could not suffer amputation. To the will of God he was ready to submit; but to the surgeon's knife, like an ordinary mortal—never. So he lingered on, in torture of mind and body, until death mercifully claimed him on the 20th February 1879.

"The dying Amir's sentiments regarding Russia are expressive: 'The English told me that Russia was powerless, and

family after the defeat of his troops at Ali Musjid and the Peiwar Kotul, formed a material reason for hastening on the Gundamuck Treaty, as the Governor-General in Council stated that our *casus belli* lay with Sher Ali himself, and not with the Afghan nation.

The course our policy directed after we had captured the highways to Kabul was somewhat anomalous and mild. Instead of advancing our army and dictating our terms of peace to the subtle Afghan in his own capital, we rested on our arms, and after considerable difficulty persuaded the new Amir, Yakooob Khan, to visit our camp at Gundamuck, where he was received by Sir Louis Cavagnari with great state and pompous show, more befitting a conqueror than the king of a conquered nation. Our troops lined the road for three miles and presented arms as the Amir passed, and he was treated with the utmost kindness and consideration.

After many days of troublesome negotiations with Major Cavagnari the terms for a lasting peace were settled, and at 2 o'clock one sultry morning in May 1879, Mr. Jenkyns, of the Bengal Civil Service, galloped away from Gundamuck to Peshawar and Simla, "with a portentous-looking tin

could not help me. Now I am convinced myself by experience that they told the truth. You Russians are mere schoolboys beside them. I don't know which of you three is a liar—Kaufman, Stolyetoff, or you, Razgonoff.'"—*The Standard*, January 1883.

case strapped to his back," little thinking that the peace-containing box contained his own death-warrant as well as that of his chief. This treaty was ratified by His Excellency the Viceroy, Lord Lytton, on Friday, 30th May 1879. Salutes in honour of the event were fired in all our large stations, and congratulations from loyal native chiefs and potentates in India were poured in to the Viceroy from all sides.

We had now concluded a treaty with a nation whom Dr. Bellew thus graphically describes: "As a people they have always been evilly notorious for their faithlessness, lawlessness, treachery, and brutality, so much so that the Persian saying 'Afghan be-iman' (the Afghan is faithless) has passed into a proverb among neighbouring peoples, and, oddly enough, is acknowledged by themselves to be a true count, not only in their dealings with the stranger, but amongst themselves too. So far as their history as an independent and ruling people goes, they have certainly not belied the character assigned to them. A darker record of misgovernment, of vice, of treachery, of savage cruelty, and of oppression, than that which marks the career of the independent Afghans, is hardly to be found in the annals of any other independent state of modern times, or of the same period."

The substance of this treaty was that we were to have an ambassador at Kabul, a right to depute British agents to the Afghan frontier, while his

Highness the Amir guaranteed the personal safety and honourable treatment of the said British agents within his jurisdiction. The British Government restored to His Highness the towns of Candahar and Jellalabad, with all the territory now in the possession of the British armies, except the districts of Kuram, Pishin, and Sibi, which were to be only treated as assigned districts. The great object desired by the Amir, viz. that our troops should not advance and occupy his capital, was gained by him. Little did Yakoob Khan ken of the bitter disappointment felt amongst all ranks of our army when it was known that, after months of exposure and hardship, Kabul, the chief city in which the interest of the war was centered, was not to be seen. Still, the treaty was ratified, though we knew very little of the fitness of Yakoob Khan to rule so turbulent a country as Afghanistan. Recently released from a long captivity imposed upon him by his father, his mind was and is probably weakened and warped. His power was evidently limited, especially over the tribes occupying the Khaibar route. Why was not our ambassador allowed to proceed by this route to the capital, and why was not the telegraph-line to be continued by this route, instead of over the inhospitable Shutargardan, a road blocked for months at a time with snow? Yakoob Khan could neither trust his own power, nor the people under him.

The carrying into effect of the first clause of Article IV. of this treaty, "that a British representative shall

reside at Kabul with a suitable escort, in a place of residence appropriate to his rank and dignity," brought the British embassy deputed to reside at Kabul to Ali Khel, on its route to the capital over the Shutargardan pass.

On the morning of the 17th July 1879 Sir Louis Napoleon Cavagnari, K.C.S.I., styled our Plenipotentiary and Envoy, accompanied by his secretary Mr. Jenkyns of the Bengal Civil Service, and Dr. Kelly of the Guides as his medical officer, with an escort composed of seventy-seven men of the Queen's own Corps of Guides, of cavalry and infantry, under the command of Lieutenant Hamilton of the same corps, arrived in Ali Khel. The envoy's escort was composed of a picked mixture of Mahommedans and Hindoos, and a few Goorkhas.

On the day of their arrival, in order to do honour to our new envoy, as well as for reasons of safety, a personal escort was despatched from Ali Khel as far as Drekuallah, which on the following day accompanied the embassy to the limits of our territory in the Hazar Darakt defile. This escort consisted of two companies each of the 67th Foot, 92nd Highlanders, 72nd Highlanders, the 5th Goorkhas, the Derajat No. 2 Mountain Battery, and a squadron of the 12th Bengal Cavalry, all under the command of Brigadier-General Dunham Massy, commanding at Ali Khel the Kuram Force.

On the following day, the embassy, accompanied by General Roberts, V.C., his staff, and all officers

who could obtain leave of absence, marched from Ali Khel to Karatiga, accompanied by the British escort from Drekullah. Our force was camped on each side of the Hazar Darakt stream, while the Envoy and Head-quarters camp was pitched on a piece of open level ground at the mouth of the nullah opposite the fort. That evening Cavagnari gave his last dinner-party, at which all his friends were present, who drank his health and prosperity for the last time. Soon after sunrise on the next day, the camp-followers brought in word that some of the Amir's cavalry was approaching our camp. All glasses were directed to an enormous rock, standing out in relief, on a small hill on the left bank of the stream, about half a mile from our camp. This rock marked the new line of demarcation between the British and Afghan territories. Here, seated in a chair on the top, we could make out the busby, or Persian sheep-skin cap, of an Afghan Sirdar, who was surrounded by a few followers. Like ourselves, he, too, was using his field-glasses, and was surveying our camp lying below. No sign of the troops with him was visible. An Afghan Sirdar, Khush Dil Khan Barakzai, the representative of the Amir, and an Afghan general, soon after rode forward. They were received near the camp by Mr. Jenkyns and Captain Arthur Conolly, who introduced them to our envoy and General Roberts. After the usual formal introductions had been gone through, and a brief conversation held, Sir Louis Cavagnari, accompanied

by General Roberts, and followed by the British officers, walked down the guard of honour lining each side of the road to the tent, formed by the senior regiment, the 67th Foot, and, mounting their horses, rode away under a salute of fifteen guns fired from the high bank opposite, the thundering echo of the salute being caught up again and again by the surrounding hills. The envoy with General Roberts leading, our own escort of a squadron of the 12th Bengal Cavalry bringing up the rear, we rode slowly up the defile. On rounding the big boundary rock we came suddenly upon the Amir's 9th Regiment of Cavalry, drawn up in regularity on the slopes of the hills above the road.

As the envoy passed, the regiment carried swords, while their band, composed of two Kabul flutes and four side-drums, played a fantastic, if not musical, air. The officer commanding, Colonel Shahs Khan, was arrayed in a full-dress scarlet coat covered with gold lace, and was a fine-looking man. His men were not equally favoured, and, indeed, a more diabolical looking lot of scoundrels have been seldom collected together. Their costumes were inelegant; a slovenly scarlet coat, loose blue trousers, tucked carelessly into dirty boots without spurs, white pouch-belts and accoutrements, a sword, carbine, and last, but not least, a Kabul short-handled riding-whip, formed their uniform. Each trooper wore a hideous slate-coloured helmet of an ugly shape. Either this helmet or their method of shaving, leaving

a moustache and mutton-chop whiskers, gave the men a most unprepossessing appearance. After passing, the regiment fell in behind, and in this way we rode up to the Soorkai, or Red Kotul, and to the plain of Kasim Khel.

Our new escort appeared under little control, riding their chargers where and how they liked, and showing impatience at being kept in the rear. They were mounted on small, strong, under-bred horses, the average of the regiment being hardly fourteen hands. If not gifted with speed, the horses appeared strong and active, and capable of going over any kind of ground. On entering the plain near the fort, their colonel, as if anxious to show us the mettle of the corps, picked out a few sowars and started off at full gallop, followed by his men, who flung themselves into various attitudes, one throwing his head towards his charger's tail, another over the side of his neck, shifting rapidly to the other, and so on. In this way they had careered wildly for half a mile, when suddenly the horse of the colonel, who was going at full speed, disappeared in a cloud of dust, and, as it cleared, all that was visible were the four legs of his charger in the air and the rider on his back some feet ahead. The horse's feet had caught in a ditch, and he had been thrown with great violence. The colonel looked as if he must have been severely hurt, but two sowars dismounted, who sat him up and brushed the dust off his gorgeous coat as if performing an accustomed duty. Their colonel had

evidently received no injury, for, on his horse being caught and brought up, he mounted and rode away at speed.

Arriving opposite the fort, we found the Afghan Cavalry camp laid out in some order, and, at a little distance, two huge tents belonging to the Amir had been pitched for the British envoy. After a short halt we all rode on to the pass, many officers, including Cavagnari, having never seen it before. The Afghan cavalry alone accompanied us the remaining two and a half miles, adding by no means to our comfort. The troopers fell in and out as they liked, stopped to drink, and when rejoining the ranks dashed along at full speed, sometimes nearly upsetting our steeds as well as our equanimity. On returning from the pass a really sumptuous meal was found spread out for Cavagnari and his friends in one of the Amir's large double-poled tents, which just held all our party. The floor was covered with a Persian carpet, with long strips of white cloth around the trays; the dishes, which comprised many varieties of kabobs and curries and pilaus, were spread on the ground on six large papier-mâché trays six feet long by two and a half feet wide, around which we arranged ourselves cross-legged. According to the Mahomedan custom, we had to eat with our fingers, using the chupatties, made of unleavened bread, as plates. Sweetmeats and preserves of many varieties were passed round after the more substantial viands had been partaken of. Tea with milk was finally

sent round, served up in very neat Russian tea-cups, but doused with so much sugar as to be almost undrinkable. Sir L. Cavagnari, General Roberts, with some Afghan notables, sat at one end of the tent on a raised daïs.

After doing ample justice to the new Amir's hospitality, for we were most of us hungry, and a long march was still before us, General Roberts thanked the Amir's representative, and we soon afterwards started for the camp at Drekullah, Cavagnari accompanying General Roberts as far as the Soorkai Kotul. Cavagnari appeared cheerful and confident of his future success; but many of us, as we saw him for the last time disappearing round the hill to his camp, felt a sort of foreboding of evil, which the ill-disposed appearance of his new guard perhaps helped to strengthen.

The Amir's cavalry again escorted us as far as the boundary rock. Here they left us delighted to find ourselves once more with our own trusty sowars and Goorkhas, which latter had been left behind as a rear guard, the remainder of the troops during the day having returned to Drekullah. On the next day all our little force reached Ali Khel without any alarms or adventures.

General Roberts almost immediately after left Ali Khel for Simla, where his presence was required on the Army Commission then sitting.

My services were now called for in the 3rd Punjab Cavalry, but on my return I was detained on the

Peiwar Kotul for ten days, which gave me time to explore many beautiful nooks and corners, for the discovery of which I had not before had sufficient leisure. The several points where, in the fighting in December, the Afghan general had placed his guns, were always inspected by visitors. One has been mentioned in the earlier pages. Another position had been carefully selected, at the corner of a spur half a mile from the Kotul itself, which swept the approach from Habibkilla, and was well-concealed behind rocks, on which were still visible numerous marks of our bullets and shells. So true, however, was the fire from this Afghan battery on our guns, that, had their shells possessed bursting power, our battery opposed to them would probably have been disabled; as it was, their artillery fire did little execution.

The climate of the Peiwar in August was as charming as the scenery was beautiful.

My tent was pitched on the slopes of the forest, overlooking the hollow in which the roads from Ali Khel and Kuram met. An after-dinner smoke in the open, under a cloudless sky, with the full moon glistening and casting shadows from the stately pines around, the music of the 8th King's band, coming up softly from below, and echoing gently around, a cool and balmy air, formed an enjoyment of its own, and made one forget the proximity of the wily Afghan.

The pine has not been kindly dealt with in the

northern aspect, where the hills above the mess-house are nearly bare.

A zig-zag path led up from the barracks of the 8th King's, some 400 feet, to the huts of the guard holding this position above, which also commanded the road leading to the Spingawai meadow, as well as to the signal station. Though the climb was steep, the view obtained of the Huriab and the Kuram valleys was very fine. From the top of the zig-zag to the Spingawai meadow the road runs through a thick forest for two and a half miles. This line of forest was obstinately held by the Afghans on the 2nd December 1878, after their flank had been turned by General Roberts, and the hundreds and hundreds of Enfield cartridges lying on the ground, even at this date, amongst the trees, showed what a heavy fire had been directed against our advancing troops, which it was hardly possible to reply to. The Spingawai meadow lies in a hollow, surrounded by low hills, the pine forests reaching to its edge, and occupying about a square mile of area.

From the edge of the Spingawai meadow the mountain track leads down direct to the head of the long nullah which terminates after nearly four miles near Habibkilla. The flank fight in the capture of the Peiwar heights took place on the steep slopes of this hill, which was defended by three artificial barriers placed one above the other. Here the war waged fiercely, and the 5th Goorkhas, led by Fitzhugh, met the Afghans hand to hand. The approach from the

head of the nullah to the first or lowest barrier, formed by a huge pine thrown completely across the face of the hill, with rough embrasures cut in its side, as well as the ground between the lowest and second barrier, also formed of pine trees, is exceedingly steep and difficult, the gradient being almost one in eight feet; and one who has not seen it can hardly realise the natural difficulties offered here, and the rapid way the barriers were stormed shows how well both officers and men did their duty. The third or highest barrier, composed of pine, commanded the sides of the deep valley below, and was longer than any of the others, and close on the edge of the meadow.

The climate of the Peiwar is equable, dry, and bracing, and, unlike our hill stations in the Himalayas, has no regular rainy season, the range being watered by passing storms, by no means too frequent. Had we retained our hold of the Kuram valley, the Peiwar Kotul would probably have proved the healthiest of all our sanatoriums; for its dry bracing summer climate is particularly suited to those living on the dry plains of the Punjab, with whom the dampness of our ordinary hill stations often disagrees. The rainy season in our Himalayan stations causes many drawbacks to out-door amusement, whereas at the Peiwar an umbrella or macintosh is hardly ever required, though when it does rain it pours.

The almost total absence of ferns in the many shady nooks and nullahs shows unmistakably how small is the rainfall; for these beautiful plants cannot grow to

perfection without rain, or a good water-supply. Dr. Aitcheson, the botanist to the Force, writes: "From Thull to Shalufzan and up the southern face of these hills, I have seen but one fern, *Adiantum capillus veneris*."

During my ten days' leave opportunity was afforded me of ascending Mount Sika Ram (15,600 feet). This mountain was a great point of interest to all fond of climbing, and to say one had been on the top of it was something, as up to the date of General Roberts' advance no Englishman had been able to make the ascent. Yet comparatively few officers of the force went up.

The honour of first reaching the summit fell to an officer belonging to Sir Samuel Brown's force in the Khaibar, Mr. G. Scott, of the Revenue Survey. His ascent was made in the spring. So meritorious was the fact of his having made the ascent considered by the Simla authorities, that the Commander-in-Chief of the army sent him a "clear the line" congratulatory telegram.

The first ascent from the Kuram side was, I believe, made by an officer of the 14th Bengal Lancers, who climbed the last 2,000 feet alone. After this, as the weather grew warmer and the snow melted, the visits paid to the mountain were more frequent.

Dr. Aitcheson, the botanist, was going up in search of flowers, and he allowed Dr. F. and myself to accompany him. As he was bound on

scientific research and had a guard with him, our ascent and descent was leisurely made in three days.

Leaving the Peiwar Kotul after breakfast we descended into the Huriab valley towards Zabrdast-Killa, passing the tents of the 67th Foot, whose quarters were being constantly moved, owing to the presence of the fell disease "typhoid fever," which had claimed many victims. A guard of some twenty Goorkhas accompanied our baggage mules.

Our road now faced towards Sika Ram, leading for some three miles up an easy nullah, then up the steep side of a spur of the mountain, over a kotul, close to which we found a small grassy plain where we were to spend the night. Our camp was here about 11,500 feet high. In order to attract as little attention as possible, for we were about to enter hostile territory, raided over by the Shinwarris, a tribe of robbers, our tents had to be left behind. The Goorkhas, however, with their useful kookeries soon cut down and collected juniper boughs, and made us a snug little arbour. Our camp was in a small basin surrounded by hills.

In the evening Dr. F. and myself took our guns and ascended the ridge above us, some 400 feet. Here we saw and heard some snow pheasants, who were soon obscured in the cloudy mist coming up from below. Encouraged by my guide, I followed for nearly 1,000 feet the tracks of ibex over some difficult ground, through the mist, until we came

to the edge of a yawning gulf. On reaching some very difficult parts of our road my Goorkha begged me to stop, explaining that our guide, like all Afghans, was a scoundrel, and that the mist prevented our seeing where he was leading us to. The tracks, however, were fresh, and I persevered. On the top of the gulf we sat down, waiting for the mist to rise ; our anxiety being increased to a degree by the falling of small stones, which generally indicates the presence of game. An oppressive silence otherwise prevailed around. As the mist slowly came scudding up and the sky cleared, we found ourselves on the edge of an awful precipice, and opposite a perpendicular wall of rock, with high crags above, separated by an impassable gap. The ibex had evidently descended by the ridge we were sitting on, but we could not see them.

On the following morning at daybreak we commenced the final ascent. Dr. Aitcheson, with his coolies, and flower-presses, and last, but not least, breakfast for all, took a spur which led apparently direct from our camp to the summit of the mountain. Dr. F. and I made a circuitous turn to the left with two Goorkhas and our rifles, hoping perhaps to see some ibex, having first arranged with the botanist that we should all meet and breakfast on the summit. When we had proceeded slowly about a mile our guide crouched and became attentive, and we all distinctly heard at some distance the rattle of stones on the hill-side. After carefully scanning the country

from behind our concealment, we found to our annoyance that the movement on the stones was not caused by ibex, but by several camels, who were grazing at so high an elevation as 12,000 feet, a fact we had never heard of before. Far away, some 2,000 feet below, we espied the kiri, or camp, to which they belonged.

Leaving the camels in disgust, we climbed on for another hour towards some precipitous-looking crags on our left; and soon after, some 600 yards above us, feeding across the side of the hill, we saw a large herd of ibex, amongst which were three very fine males, the horns of the leader my companion declared to be fifty inches long. As they passed above we must have been winded by them, for we never saw them again, and so we lost the only chance offered to any Europeans at really big ibex on this mountain.

Our prospecting for game took us a very long detour, but when we eventually reached, tired and hungry, a small level plateau some 600 feet from the summit, we could see Dr. Aitcheson and his coolies far below, his search for specimens having detained him longer than our efforts at sport.

From our position the summit of Sika Ram now looked quite close, and what from the Kuram valley, some ten miles away, looked like a huge heap of stones, turned out, at 600 feet distance, to be the square-shaped summit of the mountain, some 600 feet in height and 600 or 700 yards long.

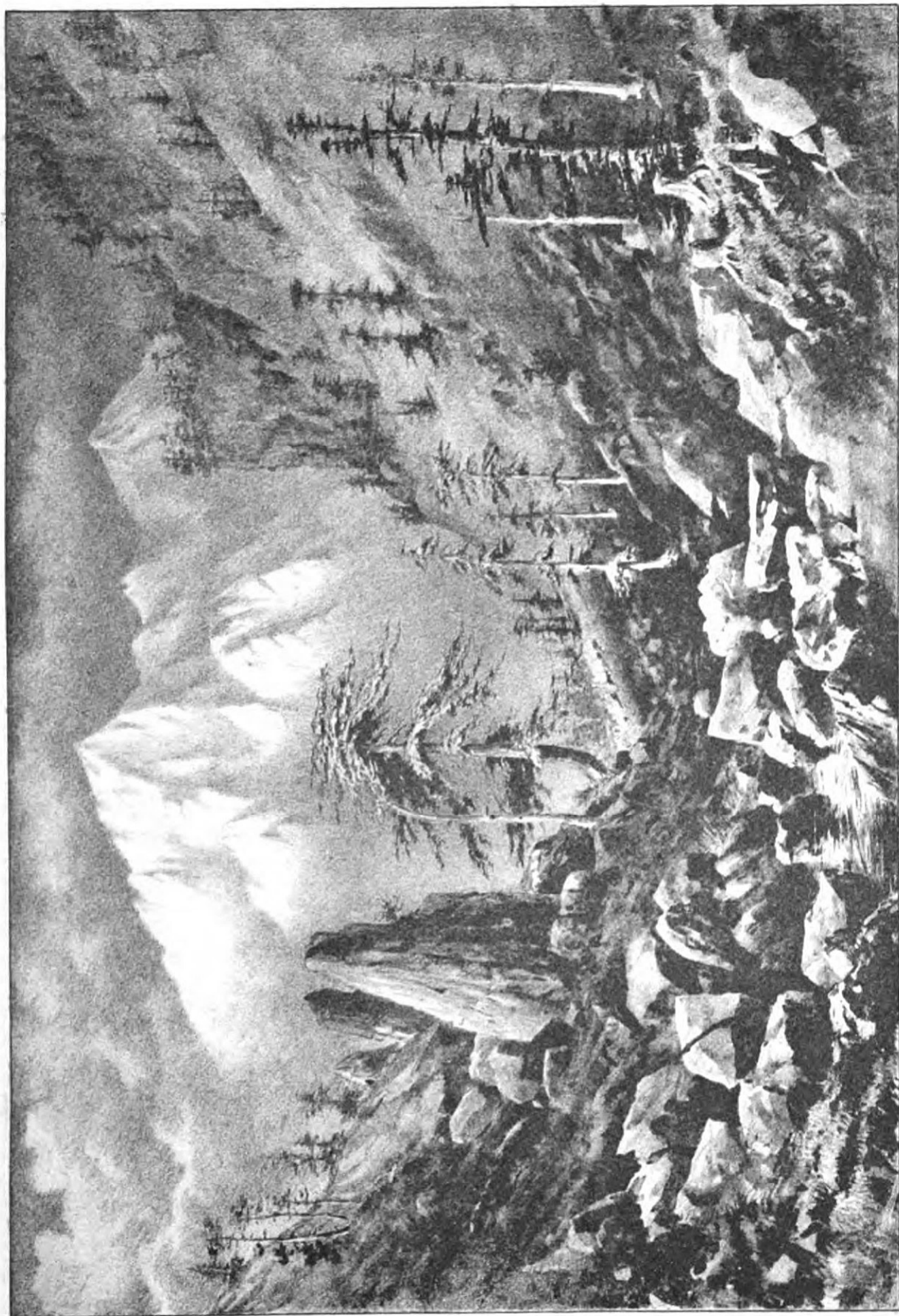
With an observant eye Dr. F. decided to cross over and ascend by the right spur. Standing then on the left spur, from which the summit seemed quite close, I decided to go straight on, though the road looked precipitous and craggy, and so it turned out, the last hundred feet in particular having to be climbed hand over hand. The rarefaction of the air now affected me much, as it does many climbers when above an elevation of 10,000 feet. A severe headache came on, and my breathing became so distressed, that I could hardly do more than fifteen paces at a time, and my reaching the top was much delayed.

Arrived there I walked along the comparatively level summit, and, half-way, found my companion comfortably asleep, he having arrived an hour previously.

Hunger now began to attack us, for we had been walking many hours, and in vain did we look in the direction of the botanist; with our glasses we could distinctly see him and his party quietly halted below, while he was devouring the breakfast. The distance was too far for shouting, and so we gladly ate a piece of the Goorkha's chuputtee and some goor* which hunger made very palatable.

The view we had climbed for was very disappointing. Vapoury clouds enveloped the Peiwar Kotul and its dense pine-forests, which occasionally showed themselves through a kindly break, and also

* Coarse sugar.



THE SLOPES OF SIKARAM IN THE SUFAID KOH, AFGHANISTAN.

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obscured the Huriab valley. To the north, in the direction of Gundamuck and the Khaibar, the sky was clear. On this side, below the summit, ran hideous layers of brown barren hills, the higher ridges rendered dirty and damp by the melting snow, which was fast disappearing. About 800 feet below the summit on this side were small ponds formed of melted snow, in which ice still floated about.

On the extreme summit (15,600 feet) we found a small plant growing in scanty earth between the rocks, with a small yellow flower like a diminutive primrose, which we hardly expected to obtain at so inclement a spot. The rays of the sun were, however, very powerful. Colonel Tanner, of the Revenue Survey, who is in the habit of frequently ascending great heights, fixes the limit of vegetation in countries situated two degrees to the north of this, at 16,300 feet above the sea-level.

Having quenched our thirst in melted snow, we commenced the descent by the spur on which Dr. F. had ascended, hoping to join the botanist below as he showed no signs of continuing his ascent from the spot where he had breakfasted. A few hundred feet below is the tomb or shrine of Sika Ram, a Hindoo devotee, formed of a huge pile of stones from which project long sticks and poles decorated with tattered rags and flags.

We now struck a track leading down towards our camp, and in half an hour came on a level with our breakfast, but found a huge chasm intervening

between us and our food, which no coolie could cross over. As our different roads did not meet until close above camp, we were compelled to proceed on, suffering especially from thirst, as we could find no water and the sun was very hot. On our left now were some ugly precipices. Between 13,000 and 14,000 feet we again came across some camels feeding on the grassy slopes, the grass though dry and brown being very sweet and good for fodder. My headache was so severe that I was obliged to go very slowly.

At 6 o'clock in the evening we finally reached camp much done up, but a basin of hot tinned soup soon put us all right. Then, in revenge for the loss of our breakfast, we chaffed the great botanist who had failed by 600 feet to reach the mountain-top. There was no denying it, for hungrily we had watched his movements with our glasses. His excuse was that the specimen and press carriers were done up. That last bit was certainly very trying for men without loads, and as we had met no varieties of flowers ourselves there, except the little primrose, specimens of which we had brought down, the science of botany had not lost much. Many varieties of flowers were procured on Sika Ram. Above the forests, in one small patch of a few square feet, I counted as many as ten different varieties of flowers and heather.

On the next day we returned leisurely to the Peiwar Kotul, stopping on the way to cut curiously

shaped, straight and curved, oak cudgels, at which Dr. F. was a great adept.

I was now ordered to Kuram, my road passing through Shalufzan, where numerous little flags showed the boundaries and streets of the new station about to be built here, and in which barracks were fast showing themselves. That dread disease cholera, raging in the Kuram valley, had not spared this pretty village, or the European troops quartered around. The climate of Kuram, which was warm in April, was now very hot, and the tents of both men and officers were protected by a thatch six inches thick, supported on a pole, some five feet above the tent ridge, and two uprights, allowing of the free circulation of air. The garrison was now reduced to a native cavalry and infantry regiment, and four mountain guns, while a company of a British regiment occupied the smaller fort. Two severe storms passed over the station in August which brought heavy floods, and rendered the nullah running between our camp and the fort impassable for some hours. The depth of the ordinary stream in this nullah was about eight inches. After the storm had raged for an hour or two we heard in the distance a low surging murmur gradually coming nearer, proclaiming the approach of the flood, and we all ran to the edge of the nullah by our mess tent. In a few minutes a small stream appeared round a curve, swelled in a few seconds by a chocolate-coloured wave which filled the whole width of the channel, and soon

became a roaring, mighty, rushing torrent, increasing in might and volume and depth until the rain ceased, when it slowly subsided, the stream on the following day running as gently as ever.

The remains of our camel transport, a few hundreds out of many thousands, under two transport officers, were kept on the lower slopes of the hills to the north of Kuram. This campaign had certainly proved practically that no proper food for this useful transport animal was procurable in the Kuram valley. At Ali Khel many hundreds were destroyed by a poisonous plant which grew there, and the remainder sent back to Kuram never did well. Indeed, the camel did not thrive to the west of Bahadur Khel, a short distance from Kohat. Between Thull and the Peiwar, the poor camel was found along the roadside in the various stages of death, from the point when he first throws himself down, far from food and water, never to rise again, to the latter stage when his haughty eyes are dimmed, and his head is twisted* painfully backwards in throes of death. Starved, weak, overladen, with often harrowing sore back as the result, the poor beast lies down, either because he cannot stand, or, as is the prevailing opinion, because he has made up his mind to go no further. His driver takes the latter view. Whack, whack, whack, on one side, severe kicks on the other, while a third assistant

* Natives affirm that the head of a camel, when dying, is always turned towards Mecca.

forcibly pulls his tail in the onward direction, are answered by deep groans and jerks. Sometimes the animal rises and falls after proceeding a few paces, and then nothing will induce him again to get up. His load is then taken off, and he is left to die on the roadside, never attempting to move from the spot.

Camels unaccustomed to the hills often injure themselves by falling. On one occasion when riding out to see some wounded men, with my friend in the Quartermaster-General's Department, we met a man driving his camels home, one of which was limping along on three legs, the fourth leg being broken and the bone projecting some distance through the skin. The driver said the animal had fallen down when grazing. I immediately dismounted to shoot the poor beast, for we always carried pistols, but my friend urged caution, and talked of the necessity of a committee first. However, the instincts of humanity were not to be checked, and ordering the camel to be dragged a little off the road, the driver made the beast sit down, which he did with much difficulty and groaning. I then fired my pistol close to his head, and the ball passed through the centre of the forehead and put him out of his misery. The effect of the ball striking the brain was curious. The animal, who was kneeling with his legs doubled under him, rose straight up into the air, his neck stretched to its full length, making him look like a huge giraffe, and then fell back dead. This sudden rise made me jump

backwards quickly, as his body appeared as if it was about to overwhelm me. We gave the empty revolver cartridge-case to the driver, as we much feared he would be punished for the loss of the animal; but we heard no more about the matter, and the animal at least died happily.

CHAPTER III.

The Murder of the Envoy.—Conduct of Amir.—The Kahar's Story.—The Leading Regiment.

As the month of August closed in, events were occurring in Kabul which, in the first week of September 1879, culminated in a direful and base calamity, the murder of our British Envoy and Plenipotentiary, Sir Louis Cavagnari, who, with his suite and nearly the whole of his escort, fell victims to the fury and treachery of the Amir's army and household troops, as well as to the incapacity, indecision, and cowardice of the Amir, Yakoob Khan, whose honoured guests they were, and who had sworn in the Treaty of Gundamuck to protect their lives and their persons.

To make the whole course of events clear, I propose to retrospect, and follow Cavagnari onwards in his journey from the Shutargardan to Kabul, touching lightly on the reception given to the Embassy in the

city, and more fully on the warnings which preceded the outrage, as gathered from the Blue Book, concluding with a description of the attack on the Embassy on the 3rd September 1879, which a good knowledge of the ground, gained afterwards, when quartered in the Bala Hissar, has enabled me to describe with, I hope, correctness.

On the 19th July 1879 we left Cavagnari in the Shutargardan. So far, every honour had been shown by the Afghan officials to the Embassy, and the reception accorded to General Roberts and the officers accompanying him had been most cordial. The behaviour of the Amir's cavalry, beyond their evil countenances and the small show of discipline in their ranks, called forth no special remarks. The onward march to Kabul was made harmoniously, the Amir displaying hospitality at every stage, where tents were always found pitched. On the 24th July the Embassy entered the Bala Hissar, the citadel of Kabul, and met with a brilliant reception. Four miles from the city, Sirdars Abdullah Khan Herati, and Moollah Shah Mahomed, with two State elephants, met them. Sir Louis Cavagnari and Mr. Jenkyns were mounted in the howdahs, and in this way proceeded, attended by a large escort of cavalry. Two batteries of artillery, with nine regiments of cavalry and infantry, were drawn up in column on the road leading to the Bala Hissar, and saluted, their bands at the same time playing the National Anthem; and as the Embassy entered the citadel a salute of seventeen guns was

fired by a battery of eighteen-pounders. The large crowd assembled was most orderly and respectful. Immediately after their arrival the Mustaafi, Finance Minister, and Daud Shah, the Commander-in-Chief, waited upon Cavagnari on behalf of the Amir.

That evening, at 6 o'clock, our Envoy paid a formal visit to the Amir and delivered the Viceroy's letter, at the same time introducing the officers of his staff. The Amir made enquiries after the health of the Queen and our Royal Family, and of the Viceroy, and expressed his regret at the lamentable death of the Prince Imperial of France.

On the following day, the 25th July, Cavagnari had a long interview with the Amir, in which his correspondence with Russia was mentioned, and the Amir promised that a copy of the reply given to the Russian native agent, then in Kabul, should be given to our Envoy. The Amir also promised to make arrangements for Major St. John, appointed our Consul in Astrabad, proceeding thither from Candahar *viâ* Herat.

Cavagnari's diary after this shows nothing of importance, as regards the coming storm, until the 29th July, when the following entries occur:

"29th July '79.—News agents report that the general opinion in Kabul is, *that now the British Envoy has arrived the arrears of pay due to the troops will be paid*, that compulsory enlistment will be discontinued, and that oppressive taxes on the peasantry and on the trading classes will be reduced considerably. It is

stated that *the Amir has kept troops in good heart by promising them arrears of pay after the arrival of the British Envoy.*"

The importance of the words in italics is very great, as they give the probable key to the disaster which followed.

On the 30th July 1879 (Diary) acts are mentioned which strengthen the previous suspicion of the hostility of Sirda Yahya Khan towards the British Government.

August 3rd. Telegram.—"All well. Six regiments of infantry have arrived from Herat."

August 6th, 1879.—The following telegram shows that mischief was brewing or being instilled into the troops, and indicates the first sign of the rebellion that followed:—"Alarming reports reached me personally to-day, from several sources, of the mutinous behaviour of the Herat regiments lately arrived here, some of the men having been seen going about the city with drawn swords and using inflammable language against the Amir and his English visitors, and I was strongly advised not to go out for a day or two. I sent for the Foreign Minister, and as he was confident that the reports were exaggerated, we went out as usual."

Cavagnari added: "I do not doubt that there is disaffection among the troops on account of arrears of pay, and especially about compulsory service, but the Amir and his ministers are confident that they can manage them." The Foreign Minister further

assured Cavagnari that in a day or two the troops would receive their arrears of pay, and be given furlough for a few months.

The serious nature of the conduct of these freshly-arrived Herat regiments I gather from the evidence of Ressaldar Major, Nakshbund Khan, Sirdar Bahadur, given after the murder of the Embassy had taken place. "On the morning of the fourth day after their arrival, they marched in order through the principal streets of the city of Kabul, headed by their officers, and with bands playing. While so doing they shouted out, abusing the Envoy by name, asking 'Why has he come here?' They also abused all the Kazilbashes, saying that they were not men, and that they, the 'Herat soldiers,' would show them how to act, that they would soon put an end to Cavagnari. They then marched out of the city to their camp at Sherpur, two miles distant."

On the Ressaldar asking the troops the meaning of all the disturbance, they replied, "Do you think soldiers would have acted thus without orders; we were ordered to act as we did by our officers, and to shout as we marched along." The Ressaldar informed Cavagnari of this, who replied, "Never fear, keep up heart; dogs that bark don't bite." The Ressaldar replied, "These dogs do bite; there is real danger." Cavagnari then said, "They can only kill the three or four of us here, and our death will be avenged." The Ressaldar then went to express his fears to Mr. Jenkyns, who said, "What the Envoy says is

very true, the British Government will not suffer from losing the three or four of us here."

August 7th. — Cavagnari telegraphed: "State of affairs reported yesterday continuing in a milder degree, Amir professing complete confidence to maintain discipline." This shows that the Amir Yakoob Khan was aware of what was going on, and perhaps gave it slight encouragement, though he may not then have anticipated the danger of a smouldering fire.

"August 8th. — Yesterday General Daud Shah visited the Herat regiments and attempted to conciliate them by offering them furlough, but it is stated that they were somewhat disrespectful, and would not take leave until their arrears had been paid up."

Now all this evidence points to a general dissatisfaction amongst the Amir's army in regard to the important subject of pay. This difficulty, his army had been made to believe, would be removed on the arrival of the Envoy, whereas the troops now found that their condition was no better than before. Cavagnari appears not to have anticipated any dangerous measures following this disappointment of the army. "In none of his private letters or official diaries has Sir Louis Cavagnari at any time expressed the slightest apprehension for his personal safety or that of the members of the Embassy." In his last private letter to the Viceroy, Lord Lytton, dated August 30th, 1879, he writes: "I have nothing whatever to complain of on the part of the Amir or his ministers, though there are many matters I wish I could influ-

ence him about. There is no doubt that his authority is weak throughout the whole of Afghanistan. This is not to be wondered at after the years of misrule and oppression on Shir Ali Khan's part. But if he keeps straight he will pull through it. . . . His conduct of foreign relations is all that could be desired. . . . I have no doubt that when disaffected persons see that they get no encouragement from us, things will settle down ; and if Yakoob Khan will *only adopt a little more conciliation, and show his subjects that he is not going to use OUR SAFEGUARD as a means of grinding them down*, all will go well." This sentence surely throws light on the Amir's policy. Our Envoy's last letter concludes : "Notwithstanding all people say against him, I *personally* believe that Yakoob Khan will turn out to be a very good ally, and that we shall be able to keep him to his engagements." A good deal of importance may be attached to the words marked in italics, if, as has been previously noted, "the Amir has kept his troops in good heart by promising them arrears of pay after the arrival of the British Embassy." This latter promise of the Amir was not fulfilled, while it is not improbable our safeguard was used by him as a threat to those who offered him opposition. Thus, both the soldiery and the common people had their different causes of dissatisfaction, while both classes saw that the oppression exercised equally upon the soldier and civilian was not to be removed by the presence of the hated Kafir. The

latest communications received from the Envoy touched chiefly on the Amir's desire to visit the Viceroy at Calcutta. Cavagnari's last telegram, dated Kabul, September 2nd, 1879, the day before the attack upon the Embassy, gave no indication of any threatened danger, and concluded with the words "All well."

On the fatal morning of the 3rd September 1879, the members of the British Embassy, probably little thinking of the coming storm, went out as usual for their morning ride.

Lieutenant Hamilton and Dr. Kelly turned off towards Bin-i-Hissar, for Hamilton wished to fix the place where the grass-cutters might safely obtain their forage for the cavalry. On their return to the citadel all went to their quarters except Dr. Kelly, who visited his hospital. In the meantime three regiments of the Amir's infantry, with only side-arms on, were drawn up to receive their pay in a garden below and about a hundred yards from the Residency itself.

In accordance with the Amir's order, they were offered only one month's pay instead of all due to them, amounting to arrears of three or four months. At this they were exceedingly angry, and demanded the arrears due to them. What immediately followed is not quite evident. The Generals present refused to distribute more than one month's pay, and evidence gathered from the Blue Book shows that they abused and thrashed the soldiers, and even referred them to Cavagnari if they wished to get more pay.

Generals Daud Shah and Karim Khan are reported to have said, "If you want more pay, go to your Shaezan * (*i.e.* your wife's lover) Cavagnari." By another witness, Daud Shah is said to have replied to their demands for more, "'Go and get it from Cavagnari Sahib.' He was angry, and said this to annoy them."

A third witness stated that General Karim Khan referred the troops to Sir Louis. Infuriated at the refusal of their demands, they are now said to have assaulted General Daud Shah, dragging him from his horse to the ground, rendering him insensible. Disappointed at not receiving their pay, and probably taunted by the references made to Cavagnari, whose arrival in Kabul had been associated with army reforms and the distribution of pay, the sepoy then rushed towards the Residency close by, some possibly with the real hope of obtaining redress, the majority determined on mischief, in which they knew their Generals would countenance them. Now followed the beginning of the end. The gates of the Residency were closed. Those, therefore, who might have been peacefully inclined were refused admission with the others.

One can imagine what followed amongst the set of disappointed, bloodthirsty, lawless men that the troops were composed of. The horses picketed outside the Residency were first seized, and stones are

* A term of abuse amongst Mahomedans.

said to have been thrown by the mob at the owners. It does not seem clear which side fired the first shot ; but after the riot had commenced, the Amir's soldiers, the majority of whom were unarmed, ran for their weapons. If their arms were in Sherpur, a distance of two miles, then a considerable time must have elapsed, and the Amir, supposing that he knew what was occurring—the scene of the riot being only two or three hundred yards from his palace—had ample time to make arrangements for the safety of his guests. Once returned, the attack on the Residency was carried on systematically and determinedly. The two blocks of buildings, with squares in the centre, were surrounded on three sides, while the fourth side, overlooking the moat, was watched by cavalry drawn up on the plain below.

The square occupied by the Embassy was separated from the other by a narrow lane, into which two doorways opened from either side.

According to some evidence, Cavagnari himself is said to have fired the first shot on our side from the Residency, when lying on the roof of his own quarters, which killed an Afghan standing at the corner of the north-east bastion of the magazine. The magazine itself was some sixty feet higher than the Residency, and completely commanded all roofs from east to west, while the parapet-wall around it, some three feet high, gave perfect cover to the Afghans. The firing soon became general on both sides. Cavagnari now sent an urgent

verbal message to the Amir by a Soubadar of our army, Karim Khan, who happened to be in Kabul on leave, demanding his aid. The Soubadar made his escape by a door on the east side of the main square, according to his account, amidst a shower of bullets. On arrival at the palace he was told to wait, and there he remained all the day. Shortly after this, Cavagnari, while on the higher roof, above the quarters on the north side of the square, the highest point of vantage, was shot in the forehead, and carried below, probably insensible and mortally wounded. The loss of their brave leader—and never lived a braver or more fearless man than Cavagnari—must have disheartened the defenders of the Residency, many of whom were now wounded. A letter was then despatched by Mr. Jenkyns to the Amir by a messenger named Nabi, which duly reached the palace, but no aid was sent. The Amir, indeed, is said to have sent his own son with the Koran amongst his infuriated soldiers, but stronger measures than the sight of the Mahomedan Bible were required. The Commander-in-Chief, General Daud Shah, is also said to have been sent to check the revolt. His authority, however, was of no avail, and he is said to have been dragged from his horse and severely injured. My idea is that such was not the case, and that he was at that time lying insensible from wounds inflicted in the pay-garden by his own soldiers previous to the attack on the Residency, as above mentioned. One thing

is certain, the Amir Yakoob Khan neither left the palace himself nor did he call out any troops to his assistance, though it is stated in the Blue Book, with other evidence, that the General commanding the artillery offered to bring down his battery and sweep the approaches to the Residency, but that he received rebuke instead of encouragement. The attack on the Residency was in the meantime closely pressed, and holes were cut by the Afghans in the east side of the main square, while all the roofs of the adjoining houses were occupied, and the defenders were hemmed in on all sides. A second written appeal was now despatched by Mr. Jenkyns to the Amir, but the messenger, a Hindoo, was cut to pieces outside.

The evidence of Timour, a sowar of the Guides, (whose statements in the Blue Book have not been considered satisfactory,) shows that he was despatched by Mr. Hamilton, commanding the escort, to Karim Khan, the General commanding the Afghans, offering them six months' pay, but that he was stripped and beaten, while the General replied that his men were out of hand.

The attacking forces now brought up two guns, and planted them within fifty yards of the gate of the portion of the Residency containing the hospital and cavalry quarters. This gate was blown in. The roof on the north side of the Residency was now in the possession of the Afghans, and the whole building was practically untenable, whilst flames burst forth

from the lower quarters on this side, the fire having originated, according to some evidence, with the mutineers, who had gained access below by holes cut in the eastern wall; according to others, with the defenders of the Embassy in the hope of driving off their enemies from above. Certain death now faced the few brave men remaining, for no mercy could be expected from the Afghans.

Led by Hamilton, and followed by Jenkyns and Kelly, some of the escort—a small band—issued from the western gate of the main square, and rushed on the two guns, sending the gunners flying.

An eye-witness of the scene, Ressaldar Nakshband Khan, looking on from a window about 200 yards off, states: "About 9 A.M., while the fighting was going on, I myself saw four European officers charge out at the head of some twenty-five of the garrison. They drove away a party that was holding some broken ground. When charged, the Afghans fled like sheep before a wolf." Cavagnari must have led this charge before receiving his wound. About a quarter of an hour after, another sally was made by a party with three officers at their head. Cavagnari was not now with them. A third sally was made with two British officers leading—Hamilton and Jenkyns. In this rush Hamilton fell, but not before he had sabred and pistolled five of his assailants, his body being found cut to pieces, either close by or on the gun. Jenkyns, the civilian, also fell in this charge, and his body was found lying within twenty yards of Hamilton. Dr.

Kelly was said to have been killed in the Residency; his body was seen there. He was possibly wounded in one of the sorties, or engaged there in attending Cavagnari and other wounded.

Thus, on the 3rd September 1879, perished the British Embassy in the citadel of Kabul, within a few yards of the Royal Palace. The gallant fight made by the few defenders against mighty odds, has seldom been surpassed. Three hundred Afghans are said to have been slain, and as many wounded. Although the members of the Embassy fell to a man, together with most of the escort, several troopers and sepoyes escaped, from whom accounts have been gathered of what took place both inside and outside the Residency. The statements of so many witnesses are somewhat conflicting. The Blue Book evidence does not appear to show that the Amir planned the destruction of the Embassy, but rather imputes the rising to the bigotry and fury of the soldiery, excited by want of pay, while much proves that the offering of only one month's pay, the taunting remarks and the general behaviour of the Generals present in the pay-garden, caused the rush to be made on the Residency. Men who should know, however, believe that Yakoob Khan got up the disturbance against Cavagnari—whom he really hated—in the hope that it would induce our Government to withdraw him from Kabul; that the disturbance, once started, went further than he intended it should; and, seeing that it had gone too far, he thought the best thing to be done was to let it go on to the bitter end.

After the mutiny had commenced, his behaviour was, to say the least of it, imbecile and useless. He practically left the Embassy to protect themselves, and, in so doing, abandoned them to their fate.

While the attack on the Residency was going on, one Jallal-ud-din, who lived in the house of the Mir Munshi, galloped off to Ali Khel, which place he reached on the night of the 4th September. His news was first received by Mr. Josephs, Superintendent of Telegraphs, who, with a guard of the 5th Goorkhas under Lieutenant T. Chevenix-Trench, was engaged in laying the new line to Kabul over the Shutargardan pass. Mr. Josephs had reached the village of Rokian, five miles up the Huriab valley. The bearer of the fatal news was sent to Captain Conolly, the Political Officer at Ali Khel. The Embassy were then reported to be defending themselves against great odds. On the news reaching Simla, Captain Conolly was instructed to inform the Amir by letter that the British Government would hold His Highness responsible for the safety of the Mission, and that British troops would advance on Kabul unless immediately assured of its complete safety.

On the following evening, September 5th, letters from the Amir reached Ali Khel, which left no doubt as to the mournful fate that had befallen the British Embassy. One letter, written at 4 o'clock on the evening of the 3rd September, addressed to General

Roberts, stated, "that in accordance with the Divine decree, which man cannot evade by his contrivance or precaution, the troops collected to receive their pay suddenly and unexpectedly raised uproar and tumult, and, having first stoned their officers, proceeded to the quarters of the Envoy." The Amir in his letter does not state the exact cause of the uproar, which was such as could be checked and remedied by no manner of means, and in which the city people joined in successive crowds. The letter further states how, first, General Daud Shah, his Commander-in-Chief, was sent to the Residency, who was wounded and unhorsed, and in a dying state; secondly, Sirdar Yahya Khan and his son with the Koran; thirdly, syuds and priests, without any effect.

On the 4th September the Amir despatched a second letter to General Roberts, in which he says: "I have no certain intelligence of the Envoy's condition. I know not whether he, with his attendants, has been slain, or someone has rescued him from destruction." Then he oddly continues, "Although this event has befallen in accordance with the Divine decree, still, a few evil-disposed persons . . . have stirred up the populace to bring about the ruin of the state by the murder of the Envoy." These two sentences are hardly compatible.

The Amir at the same time addressed a letter to his uncle, Sirdar Sher Ali Khan, our nominee and Governor of Candahar, the substance being that the men assembled to receive their pay suddenly rose in

mutiny, and first stoned their officers and then attacked the Residency. Two paragraphs in this letter are, however, untrue, and if one portion of a letter is known to be untrue, it is difficult to appreciate the truth of the rest. The two paragraphs alluded to are, first, "Till the time of evening prayer on Wednesday, with thousands of men, I defended the Envoy." Secondly, "The arsenal and workshops are so completely ruined, that of the latter not a brick remains in its place, and everything of use to the soldiers and people has been taken away from the former."

On the 12th October, the date on which the Bala Hissar was first occupied by our troops, the arsenal was found to be in the most perfect order, not a brick moved. The second arsenal in Sherpur cantonment was blown up on the night of the 6th October 1879, after the fight at Charasiab. This letter concludes by advising the Sirdar to act according to the advice of the British Government ; and, as if to apologise for the inaccuracies contained in it, ends: "In order that the Amir's letter may be fit to be shown, should you think it advisable to do so, I have inserted some words and phrases such as are advisable at such a time." The Amir at the same time wrote a letter to his uncle Mahommed Yusaf Khan, Governor of Zamindawar, giving accounts of the events of the 3rd, differing much from that sent to General Roberts and the Governor of Candahar. Only two regiments, both of the Body-guard, were said to have

mutinied, and attacked the Legation and murdered the British. Nothing was mentioned of any attempt at rescue or the participation of the people. It expressly states that no other injury was done, and by evening everything was quiet.

None of these letters of the Amir are satisfactory; they contain several descriptions of the same occurrences, which differ *inter se*, many untruths, and show the imbecility and weakness of his power at Kabul, if they do not condemn his conduct altogether. The news of the fate of our Embassy was too true; for the bodies of all except that of Cavagnari, who is said to have been buried in the ruins caused by the fire, had been seen and recognised by trustworthy witnesses. On the receipt of the news in England, the Secretary of State telegraphed out, "The occupation of Kabul is a necessity, and the advance upon it should be immediate"; and a despatch written on the 18th September 1879 states, "Her Majesty's Government need scarcely assure your Excellency in Council of their steady support in all measures which may be necessary to vindicate the honour of Great Britain, and to exact redress for the murderous violence to which the members of the Mission have fallen victims."

Orders were immediately issued for the advance of a force of nearly six thousand men to Kabul by the Shutargardan pass, and General Roberts, who was at Simla, as member of the Army Commission, started on the afternoon of the 6th for the front, to take

command. General Stewart, who was about leaving Candahar for India, was ordered to re-occupy the city, and the town was re-occupied on the 6th September; while on the same day a force of 6,000 men was detailed for operations on the Khaibar, and to provide a movable column for holding Jugdullak and establishing communications with Kabul.

The news of the disaster was kept very secret for a day or two, and at Kuram was only disclosed to the officer commanding, the Political Officer, and the officer in charge of the arsenal.

Immediately it was known, intense indignation filled all minds, only soothed by the knowledge that at last the Afghans would receive a severe punishment. The same evening, September 7th, found me once more on the road to the front to join the 5th Goorkhas, and enjoying the hospitality of the 5th Punjab Infantry at Shalufzan. The next morning I reached the Peiwar Kotul pass, and in the afternoon rode into Ali Khel, passing once more through the old familiar Huriab valley, now shorn of much of its beauty, as the harvest had been gathered in. The 5th Goorkhas had marched hurriedly that morning, without tents and with very little baggage, and had reached Drekullah, nine miles distant. One or two companies of the 72nd occupied the nearer village of Rokian, five miles. On the 9th the Goorkhas reached Karatiga, and camped inside the fort. Beyond four square walls, no accommodation or cover was found except one small circular room

in a corner bastion, which was used by us as a cook-house. One wall commanded the plain on the opposite side of the stream, where poor Cavagnari's tent had been pitched, and where he had given his farewell dinner only forty-seven days previously. During the 9th, beyond the arrival of a few travellers from Kabul, nothing of interest occurred; no enemies had been seen or heard of, and we all retired to rest early. About 10 o'clock we were roused by the sentry, who came to report the arrival of a refugee from the Residency at Kabul. This was the first individual connected with the Embassy who had escaped over the Shutargardan pass, although several others had made good their escape by the Khaibar. His arrival, therefore, excited much interest. He was a Kahar. The story he gave was as follows :— Seven days ago, between 6 and 7 o'clock, the members of the Embassy went out as usual for their morning ride, and on returning all went to their quarters except Dr. Kelly, who visited his hospital. The Kahar himself went out at this time to the city, and during his absence, the attack on the Residency commenced. He then returned to the hospital, which he found empty, and seeing the other Kahars and servants running towards the Residency square, he ran away and hid himself in a field of Indian corn. Here he took off his turban and turned his coat inside out, and lay in hiding all day. While thus concealed he heard heavy firing going on in and around the Residency, and also the whiz of bullets over his head.

By mid-day the Residency appeared to be on fire, and after this guns were fired. The rifle firing now continued until 4 o'clock, when all became quiet. He himself saw little of what took place, lying concealed for fear of his life. As soon as it became dark he cautiously left the field and proceeded in the direction of the Shutargardan pass, and hid himself again in a field near the road-side. While concealed here he overheard some Hindoostani Mahouts in the Amir's service, out with their elephants, talking together and describing how all the Sahib's troops and followers had been killed, and also mentioning how that someone had been tied to a donkey and dragged round the city. This, if true, probably referred to a Goorkha, said to have been tied to a donkey and made to drink cow's blood, thereby destroying his caste and his hope of salvation, and then killed in cold blood. A Hindoo whom I met in the city in November, when walking with another officer, told us the same story, and how that he and some other Hindoos had secretly taken away his body and burnt it in their own house, cremation being the usual custom amongst the Hindoos. During the day the Kahar lay in the field, and on the following night he travelled three miles to another hiding-place. Once through the Kabul gorge he was comparatively safe in open country, but up to this many villages had to be avoided and manœuvred. Continuing thus to travel by night, he reached the Shutargardan pass, fifty-four miles, on the night of the 8th September,

and hid behind a rock at the mouth. At dusk he left his rock and reached Karatiga Fort, in which we were quartered, about 8 o'clock. With much caution he approached the fort, and was immediately challenged by the Goorkha sentry. Not knowing that our troops had advanced thus far, or whether the challenge came from friend or foe, the poor wretch crawled away on his stomach to the river-bed and hid himself. While sitting here in a state of fear and doubt, the last post was sounded, music he had often heard before, and he now felt pretty sure British troops must be inside. Summoning up courage, he soon afterwards again approached, and in answer to the Goorkha's challenge replied that he was a refugee from Kabul, and that he believed he was the only man who had escaped.

For seven days this man had tasted no food except the ears of corn he picked in the fields, and he stated that he had not dared to sleep since he started, which quite accounted for his haunted, weary look.

On the following day, September 10th, the Derajat Mountain Battery, six guns, under Major Swinley, and the 23rd Pioneers, under Colonel Currie, reached Karatiga, where Colonel Currie assumed the command. Soon after midnight a letter reached Colonel Currie from Captain Conolly, the Political Officer at Ali Khel, stating that he had received news of an attempt to be made to seize the Shutargardan pass before us. Two hours afterwards the whole of our force, with the exception of a small garrison left to hold the fort,

were silently marching for the Shutargardan pass. A late moon lighted our road as we marched up the defile and over the Soorkai or Red Kotul into the plain of Kasim Khel. Up to this point we had only once been challenged, by a Ghilzai shepherd. In front of us a line of fires was now visible in the distance, evidently at the base of the hills behind the fort, distinct in the darkness, for the moon had set. A halt was now made, but the light was found to be only the fires of some Ghilzai shepherds cooking their food before sunrise during the holy month of the Ramazan. (During this period of fasting, from the rise of one new moon until the rise of the next, all true Mahomedans abstain from food, water, and smoking between sunrise and sunset. Immediately the sun has set, food and water are partaken of in large quantities, and a second meal is eaten just before sunrise. Should the Roza month occur in the hot weather much distress is felt at first from thirst. The rule is not enforced during an actual journey or sickness, nor until the follower of the Prophet has attained the age of fifteen.) Our little force then continued its march, leaving the fort on our right, just visible in the breaking day. We now rapidly advanced, and rounding the hill which hides the watch-tower on the right of the road, we found the pass quite deserted. The sun was just rising, its first faint rays gilding the peaks of the higher hills on each side. Captain John Cook, V.C., then commanding the 5th Goorkhas, was the first on the summit. No

enemy was visible anywhere, and three Afghan horsemen, who suddenly came into view from the steep zigzags below, were evidently much surprised at seeing a long line of men on the horizon, talking and coughing after their long march, for they speedily turned their horses' heads and disappeared. So on the 11th September 1879, at 5 A.M., the Shutargardan pass was occupied without a shot being fired. The news which had caused our rapid advance was not all true, as we heard that no troops had even reached Kushi in the Logar Valley, thirteen miles distant. That day and the next were occupied by our troops in entrenching themselves. The Goorkhas held a small plateau on the Kabul side of the pass, on each side of the road, with pickets posted commanding all the approaches from this direction. The 23rd Pioneers defended the pass itself and the heights on each side, and guarded the mountain battery camped on the right of the watch-tower. The water-supply was limited both for man and beast. A small quantity was obtained from a spring on the Kabul side, and a larger supply on the Kuram side, about half a mile from the summit.

On the 13th the Goorkha advanced picket reported the arrival of a party of horsemen below, who had sent a messenger on from the defile beyond. The horsemen soon afterwards appeared below our camp, and proved to be the escort of the venerable Nawab Sir Golam Hussain Khan, K.C.S.I. This trusted Government servant was proceeding from Candahar

to join Major Cavagnari in Kabul, and had arrived within a few marches of Kabul when the massacre occurred. The Amir sent messengers to stop his advance, and he in consequence changed his route to Kushi, where Padshah Khan, the great Ghilzai chief, entertained him, and sent his brother Allah-o-Din to escort him to the British camp. Beyond the robbery of part of his baggage, he had hardly been molested.

On the same evening Brigadier-General T. Baker, Military Secretary to the Viceroy, arrived to take up the command of the 1st Brigade of Infantry. No time was lost by this energetic officer. That evening a reconnaissance was ordered, and the following morning the 5th Goorkhas proceeded eight and a half miles in the direction of Kabul, through the Dobundi defile as far as the Shinkai Kotul. The road led by a long steep detour to the left into a stony nullah, and then turning sharp to the right, opened in the defile. The cliffs on each side now became precipitous. About the middle of the defile the sides converge within a few feet of each other, almost closing the road, which at one spot we christened the "Iron Gateway." This narrow portion is about one hundred yards long. The space at the entrance is forty-two feet across, and the distance across at the exit is only twenty-one feet. The stream flows through this opening, across which we found a small obstruction in the shape of a stone wall, which, however, offered us little impediment, and it was soon cleared away sufficiently

to allow of the ammunition mules getting through. Two small loop-holed breast-works had been erected on the rocks on each side of the Kabul end, which completely commanded the passage, but which could be easily turned on either side and rendered untenable. After passing through the "iron gate" the valley gradually opened out, and cultivation and small villages were met with for two miles. An old deserted fort of considerable size, on the left bank, commanded these villages as well as the mouth of a nullah and a small feeder running at an acute angle, on the bank of which was a curiously-shaped fortified village. About a mile beyond these villages was a large orchard, through which the road turned round sharp to the right to the Shinkai or White Kotul, visible about a mile off. The Goorkhas were halted under the shade of the fruit trees, while the General rode on to inspect the road. During his absence we purchased delicious grapes from some merchants coming from Kabul, who had several donkey-loads of this fruit. Our return march was accomplished in quicker time, as we saved nearly three miles by ascending a short cut, though the road was very steep. The climate on the pass in September was pleasant and bracing; but though ice even then formed at night, the sun's rays were very hot in the daytime.

On the evening of the reconnaissance, about 9 o'clock, we heard one of the first signs of winter, the cry of the culan, a large species of crane, making his way towards the plains of India. These migratory

birds return to their breeding localities in April and the end of March, and in the Kuram valley strings of them, sometimes of great length, are seen flying towards the Hindu Kush. In their long journeys they often have to cross very high mountain ranges, and it is said by the Afghans that in the lowest depressions of the Hindu Kush they spread their nets and thus catch the culan in hundreds, owing to their attempting only just to clear the summit of the hill in their line of flight. Colonel Tanner, of the Revenue Survey, has told me that he has seen these birds flying as high as 18,000 feet (he himself being at the level of 16,000), where, apparently owing to the thinness of the air, they are obliged to give up their usual graceful sailing motion, a movement usually sustained by two or three flaps of the wings, and to propel themselves by a continuous short flapping of their wings, which seemed necessary to support their flight onwards.

On September 14th the Mongols and local Ghilzais first commenced to annoy us by firing into the camp of No. 7 Sappers and Miners, under Lieutenant Nugent, who were making the road over the Red Kotul. Fortunately no one was injured, and, their work being finished, they marched the next day to the pass. The road to the Dobundi defile was being rapidly made by the 23rd Pioneers, who had blasted it in several places. Each regiment, however, did its share in road-making, the Goorkhas completing the road running above and through their camp, while

seventy men of the 72nd, under Major Tingcombe, completed the road on the summit.

On the 17th the wing of the 72nd, under Major Stockwell, arrived and camped near the fort of Kasim Khel. By this date the road was ready for guns from Ali Khel as far as the Dobundi defile, a distance of nearly thirty-seven miles. It was also hoped that sufficient supplies would be collected in Kushi from the Logar valley, to enable our force, when once the advance took place, to act independently of its base. While holding the pass two difficulties were offered to the commissariat, one being the water-supply and the other forage for cattle, which could only be obtained in the smallest quantities and at exorbitant rates. The mules of the battery obtained little forage beyond the daily issue of grain. They persistently neighed and whinnied at night in consequence, and, in spite of the cold, ate up their own or their comrades' blankets, and even the hair on each other's tails. Mules, however, are all but omnivorous, and show peculiar desires even when well supplied with food. Out of sheer mischief they will eat up their ropes and rope-pegs, and sometimes even try their masticatory powers upon their iron pegs. In Sherpur, the poles of the temporary sheds in which they were placed during the cold weather had to be protected with bricks to prevent their being eaten down. Persian mules are said to be better tempered and better mannered than others. Although forage for animals was scarce, we were able to purchase great quantities of grapes and

water-melons, brought upon donkeys from the Logar valley ; and as our camp was the first approached from Kabul, we were generally in clover in this respect. The donkeys which carried up the fruit in paniers and baskets were very fine animals, and, since they required little food, were often purchased by officers to carry an extra load and assist in lessening the miseries of the Kabul scale. A fine black Heratee donkey, costing thirty-five rupees, carried with ease, at a quick pace, two maunds, or 120lbs., for a long march.

On September 18th the head-quarters of the 72nd, under Lieutenant - Colonel Clarke, joined the wing under Major Stockwell near Kasim Khel. On the same day an old pensioned native officer arrived, Ressaldar Nakshbund Khan, who was accompanied by another, Ressaldar Bawal-o-Din, then on leave in Kabul. They had feared to come before, owing to the danger incurred by showing sympathy with our cause.

The old pensioner spoke bitterly of the Amir's conduct on the day of the murder. He stated that the Afghans pelted the Embassy with stones, and, in consequence, one shot was fired at them. They then, being unarmed, returned to their barracks at Sherpur, distance two miles, to procure their weapons, and had the Amir then sent his own guard to the Residency the massacre might have been averted. He also told how the dead bodies had been allowed to lie unburied, in the sun, for three days, and that the Amir had recalled his regiments sent to Turkestan.

September 21st.—The Mongols and Hussain Khel tribes, determined to annoy, sent a representative, who was brought in by the European sergeant in charge of the Sappers and Miners, to General Baker. This man stated our camp would be attacked unless a large sum of money was sent to them. The first part of this information was considered mere bravado, and the latter part, of course, was taken no notice of. Their threat, however, was carried out the next day.

September 22nd.—At daybreak the Superintendent of Telegraphs, without informing General Baker, despatched eighty-four mules, under a small escort of the 5th Punjab Infantry, to Karatiga to bring up some telegraph wire. Near the Soorkai or Red Kotul the Mongols carefully concealed themselves.

The convoy, which had frequently been along the same road, and were, perhaps, proceeding carelessly, were suddenly attacked. Eight out of the ten sepoy were killed, as well as twenty-four muleteers, while two more were horribly wounded, and all the mules were carried off, a great loss to our transport, as they were never recovered. A small detachment of the 5th Punjab Infantry, under Lieutenant Mackinstray, was holding some ground near the Kotul, but out of sight of the mule party. The wily Afghans, aware that the noise of their fire would bring out this force, attacked the picket of this post at the same time, killing one sepoy who refused to run, and continuing to fire volleys into the post, which was

surrounded only by a low wall, and thought itself the only object of their attack. They were thus enabled to carry off their booty. The troops in the Shutargardan fell in on the news being received, and the heights overlooking the valley up which the marauders fled were held, but nothing was seen of them, and all returned to camp at 4 o'clock. On the same afternoon Major Hastings, who accompanied General Roberts to Kabul as Chief Political Officer, arrived at the pass. The tribesmen who had looted us that night, fired volleys into the 5th Punjab Infantry which had reached Karatiga, and so annoyed them that a party had to be sent up to hold the heights, when the enemy decamped.

CHAPTER IV.

Advance of General Roberts's Division over the Shutargardan Pass—General Baker occupies Kushi.—A Natural Pigeon Trap.—Reconnaissance in the Logar Valley.—Afghan Sentiments.—Death of a Robber.—The Amir gives himself up.—General Daud Shah.—His Wounds.—Yakoob Khan.—General Roberts is fired at.—Dr. Townsend wounded.—A Patrol cut up.—The 92nd.—General Roberts visits the Amir.—The Advance on Kabul.—The Logar River Baggage Difficulties.—Suspicious Conduct of a Follower of the Amir.—Camp before Charasiab.—The Afghan Position.—Suspicion against the Amir.—The Action of Charasiab.—Our Right Flank Attack.—The 92nd storm the Hills.—Our Left Flank Attack.—Our Infantry Losses.—Afghan Killed and Wounded.—Importance of General Roberts's Victory at Charasiab.—Explosion of the Sherpur Magazine.—The Mutinous Troops hold the Asmai Hill.—They escape after Dark.—Camp at Siah Sung.

THE force under the command of General Roberts was told off into the following brigades:—

1st Brigade, Brigadier-General Baker, C.B., commanding:—72nd Highlanders, Lt.-Col. Clarke; 5th Goorkhas, Lt.-Col. Fitzhugh; 5th Punjab Infantry, Lt.-Col. McQueen; the Derajat Mountain Battery (six guns), Major Swinley.

2nd Brigade, Brigadier-General Macpherson, V.C.:—
92nd Highlanders, Lt.-Col. Parker; 67th Foot,
Lt.-Col. Knowles; 28th Punjab Native Infantry,
Colonel Hudson; 23rd Pioneers, Colonel Currie.

Cavalry, Brigadier-General Dunham Massy:—
1st Squadron, 9th Lancers (regiment to follow), Maj.
Apperly; 14th Bengal Lancers, Col. Ross; 5th
Punjab Cavalry, Maj. Hammond; 12th Bengal
Cavalry, Maj. Green; Field Artillery, Roy. Horse
Art., Maj. Smyth-Wyndham; G-3, Roy. Art., Maj.
Sydney Parry; two Gatling guns, Capt. Broadfoot.

On the advance taking place the Shutargardan
was to be held by:—

Colonel Money commanding:—3rd Sikhs, Col. Noel
Money; 21st Punjab Native Infantry, Maj. Collis;
No. 1 Mountain Battery, Capt. Morgan.

The force left at Ali Khel was under the command
of Brigadier-General Gordon, C.S.I.

The first advance on Kabul, as far as Kushi, 13
miles, took place on the morning of the 24th Sep-
tember 1879. This movement was especially welcome
to the troops who had been shut up in the pass since
the 11th instant. This small column, composed of
the 5th Goorkhas, 23rd Pioneers, one Company of
Sappers and Miners, one company of the 72nd High-
landers, and four guns of the Derajat Battery, and
12th Bengal Cavalry, left the Shutargardan at 7 A.M.,
and slowly marched to the base of the Shinkai Kotul,
over which the road led through some huge boulders
by a gradual ascent of half a mile. The Pioneers

and Sappers and Miners immediately set to work, and in three hours had made the road passable for guns. The main body then advanced through the low hot hills, and debouched into a large plain beyond. The village of Kushi was hidden in a deep ravine on our left, so that we could not observe it until close at hand, and the length of the march, in consequence, seemed very great. All suffered much from thirst, as no water had been obtained since leaving the Shinkai Kotul.

Our camp was pitched on the right bank of the ravine, which was about three miles long and half a mile wide, each bank being more than a hundred feet in depth. The ground in the hollow below was irrigated by the stream issuing from the Dobundi defile. All the land was beautifully cultivated ; the trees around the villages grew luxuriantly, and formed a real oasis in an otherwise hideous desert. A mile beyond our camp was a large fort, in good repair. Inside, near the centre of the courtyard, was a large dry well, on the sides of which lived numbers of pigeons, which proved a most acceptable addition to the table. A more perfect natural pigeon-trap could hardly be imagined ; the birds rose singly and in couples when stones were thrown in, and in great numbers when a whisp of burning grass was let down. The ground outside this fort was used as a camp by the Amir's army, who here practised musketry at rifle-butts cut in the slopes of the adjoining hills. The inhabitants of Kushi and Zergan Shah, were

Tajaks, a comparatively peaceful tribe and more inclined to be friendly with us than the Afghans.

Two companies of the Pioneers and the Sappers and Miners were left on the Shinkai Kotul, which was held in turn by different regiments passing on until the general advance from Kushi took place. On the same day the 72nd Highlanders, and F-A. Royal Horse Artillery, having marched over the pass, halted in the Dobundi defile, and reached Kushi on the following day.

September 26th.—General Baker made a reconnaissance with a small force of cavalry, infantry, and mountain guns to the village of Zergan Shah, eight miles off. From here the infantry returned alone, while the cavalry and guns accompanied the General in a long detour towards the Logar valley in search of forage.

The villagers were at first sullen and refractory, refusing to give up grain which they said belonged to the Amir. The aspect of the guns pointed on the village, however, produced the desired effect, and a large quantity was brought into camp. Our presence was evidently distasteful to the Afghans, and was expressed on two occasions to different officers, who afterwards told me what had occurred. A young officer in the Quartermaster-General's Department rode up to one of the Padshah Khan's villages, then our well-paid friend, when a villager, annoyed at his presence, angrily drew his hand several times suggestively across his throat. Another remarked to a

cavalry officer, "Do not come near me, or your shadow will defile me."

September 27th.—The 14th Bengal Lancers, the remainder of the Pioneers and Sappers, and the 5th Punjab Infantry, less three companies holding the Kotul, arrived at Kushi. During their march a picket of the 5th Punjab Infantry, holding the rock overlooking the "iron gateway" on the Dobundi defile, were fired into by some twenty men. Our sepoy returned the fire without effect, until the jamedar, a good shot, taking a rifle, shot an Afghan through the thigh, when his comrades fled and left him. The jamedar then advanced on the man to take him prisoner, but the robber in the meantime had loaded his rifle, and fired at the officer when quite close to him, who was therefore obliged to cut him down with his sword. This is one instance out of many showing the danger from wounded Afghans. They often feign death on the battle field, in the hope of delivering a dying and desperate sword-stroke at any European or native soldier passing by.

The event of this day, however, was the arrival in the camp of the Amir, Yakoob Khan himself. About 9 o'clock a special messenger brought in news to Major Hastings, our Political officer, that the Amir was coming to our camp, and that he was then halted with his retinue some five miles off, on the other side of a low range of hills on the north of our camp. This news rapidly spread, and produced feelings of surprise, mingled with regret that the Amir, by throwing him-

self on our mercy, had, to a certain extent, deprived our army of the opportunity of administering to him that punishment which many of us thought he deserved.

A shamianah, or square tent, was immediately erected for him in the middle of our camp, and beside it two or three small ones for his followers.

A squadron of the 12th Bengal Cavalry now accompanied General Baker and Major Hastings from our camp towards the hills behind which the Amir was halted. On the news of the Amir's approach being received, Major Hastings rode ahead and received him on the brow of the hill, and afterwards introduced him to General Baker, who awaited his arrival below. The Amir's baggage-ponies and his attendants formed a long line behind. In this way they approached our camp, from which all glasses were directed towards them. As the party drew near, our soldiers and camp-followers ran up from all sides, and the squadron of the 12th, with drawn swords, had some difficulty in keeping the road clear. A mixture of curiosity and hatred was, I imagine, present in all minds as the Amir, looking far from happy, rode through our camp that day.

The old Ressaldar Nakhsbund appeared angry and excited on seeing some of the Amir's friends, shaking his fist in their faces and pouring out Afghan epithets of scorn and dislike.

The Amir on arrival dismounted, and with his ministers entered the tent prepared for him, where he remained all day. A guard of the 23rd Pioneers

was immediately told off, a sentry watching each of the four sides and preventing the curious from prying in.

It was then ascertained that the Amir, fearing the mob in the city, had secretly fled from Kabul. In the morning he had sent, as he was often wont to do, some tents to his suburban garden at Beni-Hissar, and joined them soon after with his followers. In the evening some of the tents were sent back to the Bala-Hissar, as if to show his intention of returning as usual. Instead of doing so, at dusk he left the garden with some of his ministers, and rode away all night until he reached the village of Zergan Shah; from here he sent on his messenger ahead to our camp, and followed leisurely afterwards.

The reception of the Amir had hardly been as cordial as he had anticipated, and he was probably not quite happy. In the evening the band and pipers of the 72nd Highlanders played in the open space in front of his tent, most of the officers in camp attending. The Amir and his visitors were visible inside the tent, the doors of which had been rolled up.

About 9 o'clock a mortally wounded camp-follower walked into our camp. He and three of his comrades had been surprised by some Ghilzais on the low hills between our camp and the Kotul, who suddenly rushed out on them with their terrible knives, killing the other three and leaving this man as dead. Notwithstanding that his right hand was nearly severed from the arm, that his head and left arm were gashed, and that he had received a severe stab in the chest,

through which the air rushed in and out, he had walked several miles into camp, where he died the next morning. Camp-followers most recklessly disobeyed orders about straying from camp, and on the line of march, yet the frequent punishment of their apathy produced little effect; but their carelessness offered no excuse for the cowardly way in which the Afghan rushed on his helpless victim.

September 28th.—The Amir having expressed a desire to Major Hastings that the wounds General Daud Shah had received on the morning of the 3rd September should be examined and treated, General Baker ordered me to visit him at 10 o'clock. On entering the shamianah with my native doctor, who spoke Persian, the Amir and his followers rose and received me with much respect, the Amir offering me his hand, and then, pointing in the direction of his General, introduced me to him as well as to the different ministers sitting on each side of him. His Prime Minister, a good-looking man, with a long handsome beard and a haughty, scornful expression, sat on the Amir's right, and slightly behind him was General Daud Shah. The Commander-in-Chief of the Kabul army was one of the biggest Afghans I have met with, standing six feet four or five inches in his stockings, and showing broad massive shoulders and a deep chest, his width of shoulder being well proportionate to his height. The Mustanfi spoke Hindustani, but the old Ressaldar Nakshbund Khan interpreted for me. I then proceeded to examine

the wounds received by Daud Shah, and as more than once I have heard it affirmed that these injuries were all humbug, I will briefly mention them. On the head and forehead were five wounds, three on the back of the head, one on the forehead, and one above the eye-brows. Three out of the five had healed, the fourth nearly so, whilst the fifth, which extended to the bone, was painful and irritable owing to the presence of a tuft of hair embedded over the bone, and which was removed with forceps. Near the middle of the stomach was a sixth wound, not quite healed. All had been inflicted some weeks before. The General explained to me that he had been dragged from his horse, and that whilst on the ground was beaten with stones, and a bayonet had been thrust at his stomach, which was arrested by the thick kummerband usually worn by Afghans, or otherwise it might have proved fatal. At this time I fully believed that he had received these wounds in his attempt to check the attack on the Residency, and that in consequence he was deserving of respect and admiration.

On the following evening Major McQueen, commanding the 5th Punjab Infantry, who speaks Pukhtoo, the General's mother tongue, and who is intimately acquainted with Afghans, publicly thanked the General for his endeavours to save the Residency, in performance of which duty he had been honourably wounded. Since then, however, a native officer of the Guides, who was at Kabul, and afterwards com-

manded the Gilgit escort, has changed my ideas. That Daud Shah was wounded seriously by the soldiery on the 3rd September there is no doubt, but when and where he received these wounds is another matter, and the evidence of nine different witnesses recorded in the Blue Book of the attack on the Residency, shows that these wounds were received not in an attempt to succour the Residency, but previously in the pay-garden, where the soldiers were drawn up to receive their arrears of pay, if not, indeed, in response to some taunts directed against Cavagnari, or the rough treatment of one or two soldiers, by Daud Shah himself. These statements are as follows :—

No. 1 (Blue Book, page 65). —“ . . . Daud Shah was sitting above watching the pay being given out. The soldiery began throwing stones at him, and he came down to where they were, when he was cut down with a talwar and was bayoneted. He was not killed, but there was no hope for him.”

No. 2.—“ On the 3rd September orderly regiments of the Amir were assembled without their arms in the Bala Hissar to receive their pay. . . . They demanded more. Generals Daud Shah and Karim Khan, who were distributing the pay, said, ‘If you want more pay go to your Shaezan (*i.e.* your wife’s lover) Cavagnari.’ On this some stones were thrown. Daud Shah ran away, and was slightly wounded with a spear.”

No. 3.—“ General Daud Shah rode up and was received with a salute. He then proceeded to pay

Regiment 3. A month's pay was handed to them, but the men demanded arrears of three ; the General abused them ; the soldiers replied with a volley of stones at him and then at their officers. After this they proceeded towards the Residency."

No. 4.—"Informant was not an eye-witness of the attack, but hears and after firing on Daud Shah, who was wounded in the side, made for the Residency."

No. 5.—"There I heard that three regiments broke and attacked their General, Daud Shah, who had abused them for not taking one month's pay."

No. 6.—"I met the regiments, and turned back to see the sight of the parade. They objected to one month's pay, and commenced to throw stones at Daud Shah and hit him, and with bayonets wounded him in the right side. I was looking on. They were not armed otherwise."

No. 7.—"The Ardul Regiment had some words with Daud Shah about their pay; the General wished to give them a month's pay, whilst the regiment demanded that of seven. The soldiers attacked the General with their bayonets, and struck him with stones and fists; the people rescued him."

No. 8.—"When Daud Shah was paying the troops their pay they refused. He offered them only one month's pay, and told them they were to go off the next day to Kohistan to get in the revenue. When they asked for more he told them to go and get it from Cavagnari Sahib. He was angry, and said this•

to annoy them. He was stoned, and wounded in the side with a bayonet."

No. 9.—"Three regiments were standing to receive their pay; they said that the Amir had given orders for three months' pay, but Colonel Karim Khan told them that only one month's pay had been ordered and referred them to Cavagnari. In the meantime General Daud Shah came from the Amir and beat a sepoy with a stick; another sepoy asked him why he beat his comrade, and a captain hurt the General with his sword. The mutinous sepoys proceeded towards the Residency."

No. 10.—"On the day of the occurrence I was sitting on a mound with some sepoys of the escort of the Residency, when a cry of 'Ya, char, yar,' by some regiments was heard coming from the direction of the Amir's durbar. On inquiry from a Cabuli we ascertained that some regiments had become disaffected because General Daud Shah refused their pay for more than one month, and that they had thrown stones at the General and were coming towards the Residency."

All this evidence seems to show that General Daud Shah had, perhaps unintentionally, been a factor in the attack on the Embassy.

While dressing the General's wounds, the Amir, who spoke a little English, asked me what county I came from, to which my reply was "London." He then asked which part of London; I replied, "The western end." He seemed much surprised to hear

of my living in London, and interpreted all my answers to his followers. In answer to my inquiry as to whether he was in good health, he replied, "Yes," and immediately put the question to all his followers, who, with much alacrity, replied in the affirmative, as if they were expecting some unpleasant dose to follow a negative. On completing my duty I bowed to the Amir, who did not rise, and left the tent.

Yakoob Khan appeared to have a Jewish face, his eyes were bloodshot as if he took drugs, and his expression appeared weak and undecided, unlike that of a man fit to wield the stern authority required in Afghanistan. A beard and moustache hid the lower part of his face, and he wore on his head the usual Kabul busby, or sugar-loafed hat, made of the skin of the unborn sheep.

In the afternoon General Roberts, accompanied by his staff, reached Kushi. On the previous day, in the Hazar Darakt* defile near Karatiga, his escort was fired into by a party of Mongols, evidently lying in wait especially for our General, as they had allowed another body of troops to pass unmolested into Karatiga. In spite of a hail of bullets only one officer, Dr. Townsend, the principal medical officer to the force, was wounded, a bullet lodging in his face. On the same day a patrol of the 3rd Sikhs, consisting of a havildar and five sepoy, walked into another ambushade, five out of the six being killed,

* A thousand trees.

only one escaping, who carried the news into the fort, and a party of the 92nd Highlanders arrived as a timely support to the General's escort, which consisted only of cavalry. The Highlanders got into close quarters with the Afghans on the hill-side, who, seeing their small number, commenced a charge down the hill; but a steady volley at close quarters made them turn, leaving eighteen killed on the ground. The behaviour of the colour-sergeant on this occasion was so good that he was recommended for and obtained a commission. This is the second time on which General Roberts has had to run the gauntlet of the Mongol fire, the other occasion being at Kuriah. The 5th Punjab Cavalry, one squadron 9th Lancers, and the 92nd Highlanders arrived with the General.

September 29th.—General Roberts visited the Amir in our camp, and recognised him as Amir. The interview lasted fifteen minutes. At noon I visited the Afghan General for the last time. The Amir and his suite occupied the same position as on the previous day, but were all dressed very elaborately in honour of the visit of General Roberts. The Amir looked in a happier frame of mind, and did not rise to receive me, simply offering his hand. While dressing Daud Shah the Amir inquired whether the medicines used came from Italy. On explaining to him that we used English-made drugs, he asked whether Italian medicine and doctors were not superior to others. I replied that Englishmen considered their own doctors and medicines second to none, while the

Germans and French came next to us. He then examined the dressing, asking whether it was English. Tea was now served on a tray in pretty little china cups, from a silver tea-pot. The Amir asked me to stop and take some. A cup was then first handed to him and then one to Daud Shah, who courteously passed it to me. The tea was drunk without milk, but spoiled by the excessive quantity of sugar that had been added. The Amir then asked me in English "How old are you?" I replied, "How old does your Highness think me?" At this answer he seemed somewhat annoyed, perhaps not understanding it; and I then replied, "I am thirty-two years old." He translated this answer into Persian, and then replied in English, "Then you are two years less my age; I am thirty-four." He then asked me my name, which happens to be a title of high rank in England, and he made some explanation of it to his followers. I then rose, shook hands, and, bowing, left the tent, and so ended my last interview with him.

In the afternoon Yakoob Khan and General Daud Shah returned General Roberts' visit, a guard of honour of the 92nd Highlanders with the Queen's colours being drawn up in front of the General's tent. In the evening the band of this regiment turned out in their usual faultless manner, and played some selections before the Amir's tent, which had been moved to the front of our camp, and now had near it a guard of one of the British regiments, under an officer.

September 30th.—The 28th Punjab Native Infantry

arrived this day, and on the same day two guns of F-A. Royal Horse Artillery, the 12th Bengal Cavalry, 14th Bengal Lancers, and 5th Punjab Infantry, advanced to Zergan Shah, seven miles distant. Our General accompanied this force, and returned to Kushi in the evening.

October 1st.—Brigadier-General Macpherson arrived with the 67th Foot, G-3 Royal Artillery, and two Gatlings, and received a hearty welcome, as the first arrivals were getting very tired of Kushi. The Ambulance Corps, under the charge of Dr. Isadore Burke, which proved to be most useful afterwards, had arrived, and thus the whole of the force with which General Roberts was to capture Kabul were encamped on the plains beyond the Shutargardan pass at the mouth of the Logar valley.

October 2nd.—A general advance took place from Kushi, and all the troops were united at Zergan Shah, where the camp occupied a large space of ground. The Amir accompanied General Roberts, whose escort was formed of the 5th Punjab Cavalry. The Amir's camp was pitched a little on the left, and as our regiment marched into camp, the band playing, Yakoob Khan, mounted on a fine Arab which he sat well, rode to his tent. His son, well mounted, was with him, and a servant ran alongside of his stirrup holding over him a huge umbrella.

Possessed of the full powers of our late plenipotentiary as well as his military position, General Roberts was a greater man than formerly, and a

guard of honour of the 92nd Highlanders under a European officer watched over his tent in addition to the Goorkha guard, a stalwart Gordon Highlander pacing in front, while a sturdy Nepaul Highlander stood sentinel in the rear.

In the afternoon news reached camp that the Ghilzais had occupied the Shinkai Kotul in our rear, and had collected on the heights above the Shutargardan, threatening our force holding the pass. Colonel Money, commanding, promptly attacked and defeated them with the 3rd Sikhs and the guns of No. 1 Battery, the enemy leaving thirty dead bodies in our hands. The road between Kushi and Zergan Shah was very uninteresting, passing over stony plateaux, intersected by nullahs, and finally descending to a plain level as far as the eye could reach. Scarcely a trace of any vegetation was visible, and a more desolate arid-looking country could hardly be met with. No water was found on the road. Within half a mile of camp a karez, or underground water-channel, opened out, the water of which was clear, sparkling, and deliciously cool. This little channel was full of small fish, which the Goorkhas cleverly killed in large numbers with their kookeries.*. Zergan Shah is a good-sized village, lying rear the right bank of the river Logar.

October 3rd.—The whole army, with the exception of four companies of the 72nd, under Major Stockwell, two guns G-3 Royal Artillery, twenty-five men

* Curved knives.

of the 5th Punjab Infantry, and twenty sabres, marched to Zahidabad, distance sixteen miles.

The rear-guard was formed by two Gatling guns, escorted by two companies of the 72nd and the 5th Goorkha Regiment. The cavalry moved in advance. The road crosses a great plain, at the end of which the hills on the east throw down a spur, round which the road runs towards the river Logar. Between the spur and the river, some three miles, the road was much cut up by dry canals and small water-channels, and as it approached the river was much narrowed with high banks on either side. The river is here crossed by a small bridge, which admitted three men abreast, but only one baggage-animal at a time. There were also two small fords, $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet deep or more, near the bridge. Owing to the narrowing of the road, and the consequent slow passage of the troops and baggage, a scene of much confusion presented itself by the time the rear-guard arrived in the evening. The last half-mile was completely blocked with baggage-animals of all descriptions, elephants, mules, camels, donkeys, bullocks, and it was evident that many hours must elapse before the rear-guard would reach camp, which had been formed a mile away near the opposite bank. An order soon arrived directing the Gatlings and their guard to proceed to camp, leaving the look-out to the Goorkhas. As the sun set the fords were closed and the darkness helped to delay the passage of the baggage, now crossing only by the bridge.

The uproar amongst the baggage-animals increased, and the doleful howl of the Afghan jackal mingled with the groans of the overladen and worn-out transport animals. At half-past 7, the moon, all but full, rose slowly and gave its friendly light. Goorkha pickets posted around checked the movement of thieves on the right of the bridge. On its left side was a large village, by the out-skirts of which ran a diverted channel of the river. This canal was lined by willows, whose deep shadows gave excellent cover. Favoured by the darkness, on two occasions, several thieves approached, and once had nearly carried off a mule, but they rapidly dropped their booty on receiving two or three shots in quick succession from the revolver of an officer who had been watching their movements. Meanwhile, on the far bank, the Afghan thieves were very active, and many mule-loads were carried off with much boldness, including two containing all the worldly possessions of the Adjutant and myself. The Adjutant's baggage was never recovered, but, to my great joy, the whole of my kit was discovered in a field close by the dead body of a thief cleverly shot by a Goorkha sentry. The corpse proved to be that of a Jagi adherent (accompanying Mahomed Hyat Khan, C.S.I., in his journey to Kabul) who had at last received his deserts. The last of the baggage filed over the bridge at 11.30 P.M., and we sat down to dinner in camp at the hour of midnight. Fortunately, on this occasion we were in a country where every man steals for him-

self, where discipline and co-ordination is never maintained; otherwise a well-organized attack on the rear would certainly have caused some confusion, and probably much loss of baggage.

October 4th.—A halt was made at Zahidabad to allow of General Baker's small force joining us from Zergun Shah. For the first nine miles (as far as the village of Zukkerkheyl) his march was unopposed. From here at twilight the villagers commenced to harass his column, following it up close to the bridge, and firing indiscriminately, without, however, causing any casualties on our side. Our return fire, we heard on the following day, killed more than seventeen. These villagers had shown no enmity to our march on the previous day, and only now displayed their real feelings. They had even requested that the band of one of the native regiments, which halted there for a short time, might be allowed to play.

October 5th.—The whole force, with the exception of the 67th Foot, 28th Punjab Native Infantry, and two mountain-guns under Brigadier-General Macpherson, marched to Charasiab. The road near camp was much cut up with ravines, and, after a mile or so, passed round a spur sent down from the hills on our left. On the top of this hill sat a number of Afghans armed to the teeth, who watched our army defiling past. A private of the 72nd, attending on a sick officer in our regiment, particularly pointed these men out to me, remarking: "You see, Sir, those men

sitting there doing nothing; well, that is just the way the Mongols sat and looked at us when they afterwards caught us in the Mungyar pass." This remark has often struck me since, and my experience is that when one, two, or three Afghans are seen on high hills or ground, unless with cattle, they are seldom there for peaceful purposes; either they are there to watch the movements of a force or enemy, or to give the signal to an ambuscade. While looking at them they were ordered off by a party of Sappers and Miners repairing the road below. Leaving the hill, they continued to follow on our left flank for some three miles until the road passed through two hills, and they again seated themselves on the left, watching us defile past. Curious to observe the demeanour of these men, as our regiment approached the hill I turned my horse to the left, and slowly walked up towards them, passing close in their rear. And now a little event occurred which at the time strongly impressed my mind with the idea that the Amir was not acting in good faith towards us. The Amir Yakooob Khan, with followers on each side, was at this time riding in a line on my left a hundred yards off. When close to the hill one of his retinue—an old, respectable-looking man—detached himself from the party and rode up to the Afghans sitting on the hill close in front of me, apparently not seeing me. His approach was met with much eagerness and excitement by the Afghans. Waving his hand several times significantly towards the long

line of hills on our left, he used the expression "All is well." The Afghans now observed me riding close by, and seemed very angry, one of them shaking his stick defiantly. This occurrence, better seen than described, is worthy of mention; for, on the following day, when the action on the Charasiab hills was going on, these hills were seen lined with thousands of men watching the result of the fight; and had any misfortune attended our arms that day, we should have been surrounded by thousands in the open. The follower of the Amir, as well as Yakoob Khan himself, evidently knew of the presence of these men.

Our camp was formed nearly two miles from the village of Charasiab. The rear of the camp was open, and faced the Logar valley. The other three sides were surrounded at some distance by hills of varying height. On our right front lay the heights above Charasiab in the shape of a big horse-shoe. The centre of this shoe was cleft by the Sang-i-Nawishta gorge, through which ran the Logar river; one extremity of the shoe being near our right flank, while the other faced our left flank; and on its lowest spur, a gravelly hill, the Amir's tent was pitched. Here a deep gorge through the hills on the left led, by a round-about way, to the Chardeh valley. A Goorkha company, under Captain Cook, held the hills on our left and a company of the 5th Punjab Infantry those on our right. All the roads leading from our camp towards Kabul were carefully

reconnoitred by our cavalry before dark, and from the reports received that evening General Roberts knew that the enemy intended making a stand at Charasiab. The night passed quietly.

October 6th.—At daybreak, two companies of the 5th Goorkhas, under Major Sym, were sent back as an escort to the baggage-mules returning to General Macpherson at Zergun Shah. It was now evident that the heights beyond the village of Charasiab were occupied in force by the enemy, who were collected in great numbers on the hill overlooking the gorge through which the road passed to Kabul, on the left bank of the Logar. From our camp to this gorge the distance was about four miles, hills running along the right of the road, while near the gorge were two detached hills, separated from the rest by a swamp, and from each other by a village, both of which were close to the road and were occupied by the Afghans in force, and defended by breast-works. This line of road was taken by Major White, who commanded our right attack on the enemy's left flank, and who afterwards stormed these hills in succession. The left line of attack included the hills more than two miles in length (the enemy's right), and extended from the Kabul gorge to a point some 600 feet high, on the left of the village of Charasiab. A short cut to Kabul ran through the low hills in the middle of this line. The whole of this range of hills was occupied by the Afghans; though the greater number was massed on the heights above the gorge, thinking, apparently,

that we should continue our march to Kabul without first taking the hills. Here, as we later on ascertained, twelve guns were in position; while on the plain below, hidden by some rising ground, was a battery of four Armstrongs. The position thus held by the Afghans was of great natural strength, which all who have seen those heights must allow; and only by turning either flank could they have been captured, for storming them directly, especially the perpendicular position occupied by the guns, would have entailed great loss of life, and, perhaps, have ended in failure.

Before the action commenced, another incident occurred which again helped to throw doubts on the Amir's professed friendship for us. While two officers, one on the Staff, were out reconnoitring with a few sowars, they observed a small party of horsemen approaching from the direction of the Amir's camp. They were presumed to be friends, coming from such a quarter, and, as such, were hailed in Persian by one of the officers, asking who they were. Instead of replying, the party set off at full speed towards Charasiab, firing some shots at the reconnoiters, and were soon out of sight. It was afterwards ascertained that the horsemen formed the escort of General Nek Mahomed (who commanded the Afghans fighting against us), returning from an interview with the Amir, who that day watched the progress of the fight with much anxiety through his opera-glasses.

Our right attack, which was directed against the

enemy's extreme left, was commanded by Major White of the 92nd Highlanders. His force consisted at first of four companies of the 92nd; these companies had been originally sent out to act as a covering party to the 23rd Pioneers under the command of Colonel Currie, who were to examine and if necessary repair the road to Kabul. Two mountain-guns under Lieutenant Montanaro, R.A., also formed part of the escort. The Cavalry, consisting of a troop of the 9th Lancers under Captain Apperly, and a portion of the 14th Bengal Lancers under Captain Neville, had been sent out very early to reconnoitre. Neville's troops soon reported their advance resisted by the enemy's pickets holding the rising ground around and beyond the villages of Charasiab. Major White then moved on in support of the Cavalry, and, the 23rd Pioneers having been ordered to join General Baker's force, he assumed command.

The Afghan artillery now opened fire at the long range of 4,000 yards, apparently with the view of finding the range. Two companies of the Gordons, under Captain Oxley, now advanced and drove in the enemy's pickets. Two guns of G-3, afterwards strengthened to four, sent from camp, arrived, and commenced to shell the isolated hills on the right, making some pretty practice. The enemy, however, as they always did until we really advanced, stood to their standards, crouching as they saw the guns sighted, and then, after a shell had burst, showing themselves with derisive cheers, at the

same time firing volleys in return. As this practice, as well as the fire of the remaining companies of the Gordons, made no practical effect on the Afghans, it was decided without delay to storm their position.

Captain Cotton's company now proceeded up, Major White with a few rifles leading the way, covered by the fire of G-3 Royal Artillery. The Gordons, led by their Major, then took the hill in dashing style, the Afghans holding their breast-works until the 92nd gained the summit, who, rushing forward, were received with a volley at a few yards distance, which laid five kilts low, three never to rise again. Their leader, well in advance, escaped the leaden shower, and led the way into the breast-work, while the enemy fled in confusion.

Major White was now reinforced below by 100 bayonets of the 23rd Pioneers (the remainder of this regiment, with the two mountain-guns, having joined the left attack), as well as seventy men of the 92nd, under Major Hay and Captain Gordon, and the 5th Punjab Cavalry under Major Hammond.

A considerable halt now took place ; but receiving an order from General Roberts to lose no opportunity of seizing the gorge, and observing that our left attack was progressing, Major White ordered a general advance ; while some of the Gordons stormed the remaining isolated hill on the right, the remainder advanced on the left of the road, with a view of seizing

the lower slopes of the steep heights on the left of the gorge, covered by our fire directed from both the captured hills.

In this they were ably assisted by Captain Patterson with the 23rd Pioneers, and advanced so rapidly that they were on the flank of a battery of Armstrongs, concealed by some rising ground close to the gorge, before the gunners could retire, who then fled in confusion. Rushing forward, Sikh and Highlander together, the guns were secured, the honour of first handling them, however, resting with a sepoy of the 23rd Pioneers.

This honour might have fallen to the cavalry. Major Hammond, commanding the 5th Punjab Cavalry, seeing the gorge before him, and knowing the importance of securing this passage, made straight for it, passing close to the battery on his left, and, galloping boldly through it under a heavy fire, obtained an important position in the enemy's rear. General Baker having driven the enemy from all the heights on the left, they were practically undefended, the Afghans being in full flight in all directions, and Gordon's company advanced and seized the terribly steep heights on the left of the gorge, killing some five or six Afghans who had remained after their comrades had deserted them, and securing twelve mountain-guns in position near the summit, as well as a quantity of ammunition.

Our left flank attack on the enemy's right and his strongest position was planned and carried out by

Brigadier-General Baker, C.B., who had with him the following troops:—

The 72nd Highlanders, 800 strong, Lieutenant-Colonel Clarke.

300 men of the 5th Goorkhas, Major Fitzhugh.

Two guns, afterwards strengthened to four, of Swinley's Mountain Battery.

Six companies of the 23rd Pioneers under Colonel Currie.

One company, No. 7, Sappers and Miners, Lieutenants Nugent and Butson; the escort of two Gatling guns, under Captain Broadfoot—

a very compact force, wanting only in cavalry. This body of troops marched towards Charasiab, leaving the road to Kabul on its right, and passed slowly through a large village with high and strong walls on either side of the pathway. On emerging from the village, the high peak forming the extreme end of the Afghans' right came in sight, about 1,300 yards distant in front—low, gravelly hills with ravines intervening. The advanced company of the 72nd immediately opened fire on the sides of the peak, one spur of which they began to ascend. With our glasses we could see numbers of Afghans being rapidly despatched from the hill above the gorge in our direction, as they now observed that we were about to attack their extreme right. The fire of the 72nd increased in rapidity, and our troops gradually emerging from the village were drawn up on the low hills in front. Before us, on that high peak, lay the

key to the Afghan position. Once in our possession, we should be able to sweep with our fire the hills on all sides. From our position below this peak did not appear to be occupied in force, and few heads were visible. The enemy quickly saw their danger, and immediately sent every spare man in this direction, and on the sky-line we could see them boldly ascending the steep sides of the peak, until at last three standards were triumphantly planted on the summit, and their fire was directed towards us; bullets now began to fly, the men lying down for cover.

The two companies of the 72nd under Captain Hunt were in the meantime slowly advancing towards the peak, pouring in a rapid fire. When within about 300 yards from the summit, a large open space intervened between the position they had gained and the crest, which was raked by so severe a fire from the Afghans that the advance was checked.

From the summit of the peak, as far as the Kabul gorge, the whole line of hills was seen bristling with Afghans; their leaders, many of them mounted, fearlessly exposing their bodies on the sky-line, and encouraging the reinforcement ascending to the peak.

Seeing the great importance of this position, General Baker despatched two companies of the 5th Goorkhas, under Captain Cook, V.C., with Lieutenant Chevenix Trench, with orders to carry the hill without delay. The Gatlings now opened fire to cover their advance, but soon put themselves out of action owing to the cylinder getting jammed. The remainder of the

72nd, 5th Goorkhas, 23rd Pioneers, two companies of the 5th Punjab Infantry under Captain Hall, the rest being in reserve, were then despatched at the enemy's centre, their advance being covered by Swinley's mountain guns. The 72nd carried their colours into action, which were pierced during the day by many bullets.

The enemy now showed great activity, the peak not yet being in our hands, and as the 72nd marched in companies to the attack, volleys were poured into them from the hills on their left, causing many casualties, Colonel Clarke's horse being almost immediately shot under him. Major Stockwell, with four companies of the 72nd and two companies of the 5th Punjab Infantry, was detached to carry the nearest hills, which were very steep and of a brick-red colour. The hills were stormed in a very gallant manner, the enemy here resisting stubbornly ; but our troops slowly drove them towards the peak, which was almost at the same time rushed by the Goorkhas under Cook.

The remainder of the 72nd, the 23rd Pioneers, and the Goorkhas rapidly advanced at the same time towards the enemy's left centre, thus almost joining on their right the 92nd under Captain Gordon. The enemy here fought with courage, and once were about to charge, but were forestalled by the Goorkhas, who, led by Fitzhugh, dashed at them with the bayonet, followed by a company of the Pioneers under Chesney, breaking their formation, and all fled

in confusion, two standards falling into the Goorkhas' hands, one of them of much value.

The action was now over, and the Afghans fled from their enormously strong positions in all directions towards Kabul, thousands of them running across the open plain to the shelter of the Chardey valley, our Martinis, guns, and the Gatlings accelerating their speed from the line of captured hills, but not doing much damage. Had a cavalry regiment been now available for a charge, a number of the enemy would have been cut to pieces.* The discomfiture of the Afghans was assisted by the fire of the mountain guns, one well-directed shell of Lieutenant Montanaro bursting fairly over a body of Afghans about to charge down on Major Stockwell, killing more than seven and dispersing the rest.

At 3.30 P.M., after two hours' hard fighting, the whole of the enemy's right flank and centre were in General Baker's hands, while his left flank and the heights above the gorge were in the hands of Major White.

After an hour's halt General Baker advanced all his force, and formed a junction with the 92nd. On Swinley's battery reaching the ground above the gorge his guns came into action, and silenced the

* Owing to nearly all the infantry being engaged, the cavalry with the exception of the 5th Punjab Cavalry, had to be kept in reserve for the protection of the camp, threatened by masses of Ghilzais, as well as to keep open communication with General Macpherson.

Afghans, who were directing a harmless fire on this point from the opposite bank of the Logar river. The road to Kabul, six miles distant, was now open for our troops.

Our infantry losses were nearly as follows:—92nd Highlanders (about 300 engaged), 4 killed, 10 wounded, some very severely; 72nd Highlanders (about 800 engaged), 4 killed, 25 wounded, some very severely; 5th Goorkhas (about 300 engaged), 4 killed, 10 wounded; 5th Punjab Infantry (about 150 engaged), 4 killed, 3 very severely wounded, Captain Young severely; 7th Company Sappers and Miners (about 80 engaged), 2 wounded, one mortally; 23rd Pioneers, Surgeon Andrew Duncan, dangerously, by an Enfield ball, fired at a long range, which struck him in the side.

Two dooly-bearers were killed and three wounded.

Of the Afghan loss it is difficult to speak correctly. It always seems a point of honour with them to carry off both killed and wounded, and probably only those are left behind who are killed and wounded in the last rush made on their position. Less than one hundred bodies were found on our advance; but local information confirms the idea that their loss in killed and wounded amounted to 500. I saw, as we climbed the heights, one or two wounded crawling away, and the Kahars brought up a fine young Afghan, shot through the body, who pointed significantly to his lips, and I emptied half my water-bottle down his throat, to his great relief. Our compara-

tively small loss and easy victory were, no doubt, due to the fact of the enemy opposing us being chiefly composed of sepoys, who do not fight like the mass of the people we had opposed to us afterwards. Nearly all the dead were half-dressed in uniform, many of the coats showing the numbers 2 and 3 on the shoulder-straps. Their arms were a mixture of Enfields and Sniders, some of the latter being of recent and excellent local manufacture. The Snider cartridges were made of solid brass, and could bear loading repeatedly. Many Enfields were heavily loaded as if the owner had hoped to kill two or three of us at a shot, the ramrod projecting seven or eight inches.

The 5th Goorkhas, the 72nd, and the Derajat Battery, were kept upon the heights above the gorge all night, everyone sleeping in his great-coat; The more fortunate 23rd Pioneers and 5th Punjab Infantry were camped on the plain on the Kabul side of the gorge, where they could procure water, while we suffered severely from thirst. The Field Hospital, which followed us over the hills, did not reach the gorge until 2 A.M., and the wounded had a hard time in the dark.

The importance of the victory gained at Charasiab can hardly be over-estimated. Had we, in accordance with the wish of the Amir, delayed our advance from Kushi, or delayed the final attack for one day, the enemy would have strengthened his already very strong position ; while to the Afghan mind delay would have

been interpreted as fear on our part, and the ranks of their army, to join which three regiments and some guns were marching from Ghazni, would have been swelled by the local inhabitants ; and the delay would have emboldened the thousands of Ghilzais lining the heights on our left and rear to have attacked the camp while our main body was engaged in front.

The following (Blue Book, page 117) extract from a despatch to the Secretary of State, dated Simla, October 16, 1879, shows the opinion entertained at the time of the occurrence:—"From other accounts, it appears that the Afghan regiments and the armed bands in the city held in large numbers a very strong position on the heights above Charasiab, which they defended with tenacity and with some military skill ; while the tribal levies, principally Ghilzais from Tezin and Hazarah, showed in force along the hills upon General Roberts' flank, watching an opportunity to embarrass his advance, and threatening the large convoy that was following under General Macpherson. It is now known that the plans for arresting the advance of our troops upon Kabul had been carefully laid, and that the Ghilzais had been instructed to act against the flanks and rear of our column, while the regular troops and Kabul people undertook to bar its passage across the hills in front. The information received by General Roberts decided him to attack at once the force on the heights, since delay would have given the enemy time to bring up reinforce-

ments from the city and to fortify a position which was sufficiently formidable by nature."

"Moreover, there was good reason for suspecting an understanding and correspondence between the leaders of the resistance in Kabul and the Afghans who were accompanying General Roberts' camp."

The promptness of General Roberts' action gave him an easy and almost bloodless victory.

October 7th.—General Roberts moved his camp through the gorge to the village of Bin-i-Hissar, three miles from Kabul, the 72nd, 92nd, and 23rd Pioneers accompanying him.

The 5th Goorkhas, whose remaining three companies had arrived in the morning, four mountain guns, and two companies of the 92nd, were left to hold the gorge until General Macpherson's brigade, halted at Charasiab, had passed through to Kabul. Bin-i-Hissar was visible from our hill, which formed a station for heliographic communication with General Macpherson. During the idle day we watched the villagers burying the dead left on the low hills beneath us. Two dead horses of the Afghan Armstrong battery, killed by a shell from G-3, were cut up, and taken away for food by them. We had little to do to while away the time, in our cramped position, beyond visiting the battery and the Gordons, who were on the extreme heights, and inspecting the captured artillery and its equipment.

Between 7 and 8 o'clock that evening a lurid glare lit up the sky, followed by a low reverberating

sound, which indicated that the enemy was up to some mischief. "There go Jacob's* sisters, his cousins and his aunts!" remarked a merry officer of the 92nd—a loss we should hardly have regretted. It turned out, however, to be the sepoy blowing up the magazine in the corner of the Sherpur cantonments, by which at least 150 yards of the north-west end were blown down, and a weak point formed against us during our besiegement in December.

October 8th.—During the day the rear camp and the remaining troops under General Macpherson, with all the heavy baggage, slowly defiled through the gorge below us, and reached Bin-i-Hissar, our little force on the heights now holding the rear position. About one o'clock orders arrived directing two companies of the Goorkhas and two guns, afterwards joined from below by four companies of the 67th, to march along the steep heights on our left, by the Takt-i-Shah, and hold the Bala Hissar heights, to co-operate with a force under General Baker, told off to attack a body of Afghans with ten guns holding a very strong position on the opposite hill, known as Koi-Asmai, which commanded the city of Kabul and the Kabul gorge, through which the river of the same name ran.

General Baker's force consisted of six companies of the 92nd Highlanders and two companies of the 72nd, the 23rd Pioneers, two Gatlings, and two

* Yakoob Khan's nickname.

mountain guns. This force proceeded from Bin-i-Hissar over a steep kotul, in a dip in the hills between the Takt-i-Shah and the Bala Hissar heights, by which they were enabled to gain a position near the Deh Mazung gorge, on the right bank of the Kabul river, opposite the foot of the Koi Asmai hill. From the top of the kotul a detachment of the 72nd and the two mountain guns were despatched up the steep ascent on the right, and gained the Bala Hissar summit, the guns getting into position on a small plateau outside the famed city wall, behind which the infantry took cover. This force was afterwards joined by the Goorkhas and the 67th. The infantry had now gained a position near the foot of the hill held by the Afghans, the river Kabul only intervening between them and the enemy. The Bala Hissar hill facing the enemy's position, and the intervening slopes down to the river, were also in our hands.

In case of retreat it was considered probable that the enemy would fly towards Ghazni. To prevent this eight squadrons of cavalry, under Brigadier Dunham Massy, were directed to proceed and hold this road and the surrounding country.

The cavalry gained their position without opposition, passing round the Bala Hissar and the city, the Sherpur cantonment lying on their right.

Everything here appearing very quiet, the General sent in scouts, who reported the place deserted, and defended only by seventy-eight guns standing in line,

which were then gallantly captured without any blood flowing.

No sooner had the mountain guns got into position outside the city wall on the Bala heights, than the Afghans opened a heavy fire of artillery, which was promptly replied to by our two guns under Lieutenant Smith as well as the Gatlings and their escorts, whose fire was directed from the bastions of the city wall, which directly faced the enemy's camp. The distance across the gorge was too great to allow of much injury being done to either side. The artillery duel, however, lasted for upwards of three hours, and one or two of the enemy's guns were silenced before darkness set in. The Afghan position was, however, much higher than ours, and they were, therefore, more sheltered.

Owing to the lateness of the day, the extreme difficulty of the heights to be stormed, the uncertainty of the enemy's numbers, and considering that now the enemy was sure to be caught on the morrow between our two fires, while the cavalry would cut off all chance of escape, the attack was deferred until daybreak. Before daybreak General Baker was joined by General Macpherson with wing of 67th, 28th Punjab Native Infantry, four Horse Artillery guns on elephants. We had, however, reckoned without our host. On the following day no enemy was visible. The Afghans had vanished in the night, probably commencing their retreat as soon as darkness had set in.

During the night our little force left on the Sang-i-Nawishta hill, composed of Cotton's and Gordon's companies of the 92nd, the Goorkhas, and two remaining mountain guns, were ordered to join the troops on the Sher Darwaza hill. The road proved long and tedious, a succession of very steep ups and downs, until the highest peak, the Takt-i-Shah, was reached. Here we ascertained, from the party of signallers on duty, that the Afghans on the Koi Asmai hill had escaped unharmed during the night, which was a very dark one. At daybreak, with their glasses, they had seen small parties of mounted men, who were escaping over the Arghandi Kotul.

The escape of the enemy at this time was a deplorable occurrence, and as they were chiefly composed of those troops who had killed Cavagnari, their capture and execution was especially demanded. Had this particular lot of men been killed, one of the objects of our advance would have been accomplished. But they had first defied and then escaped us; and this little fact helped, perhaps, to shape our policy of remaining in Kabul.

At 4 o'clock, after a final tedious climb, we reached the summit of the Sher Darwaza hill, and, after passing through a gap in the great city wall, the city of Kabul at last lay close at our feet. The two companies of the 92nd descended to the Deh Mazung gorge, leaving the Goorkhas and four mountain guns to hold the hill.

October 10th.—We were now commencing our fifth

day on the hills. Our new position was large and open compared with the Sang-i-Nawishta hill, while a bird's-eye view of the capital of Afghanistan, and many other points of interest we had read about, afforded plenty of scope for idle observation. One of the striking remains is the great wall, which many years previously surrounded the whole city, and the heights commanding it. This wall must have taken years to build. From the Koi Asmai hill opposite, the wall descended to the river Kabul, across which it was continued on the bridge now in ruins.

After ascending the almost perpendicular scarp of the Sher Darwaza hill it again descended to join the Bala Hissar, from which point it had at one time been continued all round the city. In many places the wall appeared built on solid, almost perpendicular rock. More than two-thirds of this great work now lies in ruins. On the top of our hill it was almost perfect. Its height was twenty feet; the upper eight feet were only two feet thick, the lower twelve ten feet thick, thus allowing a firm walk or promenade for posting troops and very small guns. The massive base was built of flat stones and mud. In its entire length the wall must have been nearly six miles long.

The city of Kabul occupies more than a square mile of ground. The houses are built chiefly of mud, and, viewed from above, look so densely packed that no streets are visible. The main thoroughfares are mostly roofed in, which partly accounts for this. A

feature in the bird's-eye view is the total absence of any striking-looking building. Except three serais, a large solitary mosque, standing in some cultivated gardens on the north side, is the only prominent object. The south-western portion of the city is occupied by the Kazilboshes, who are Mahomedans of the Shiah sect. It is somewhat separated from the rest of the city, having gateways of its own, which can be closed in case of attack. The river Kabul, then a shallow stream some foot and a half deep, enters the city near here from the Deh Mazung gorge, where it is crossed by a well-shaped bridge, beyond which, running up towards Koi Asmai, are some well-stocked gardens and orchards belonging to the Kabul nobility. The Bala Hissar fortress lies to the south-east of the city, and, though apparently forming part of it, this portion is completely distinct and separated by a shallow ditch, except where it joins the Sher Darwaza hill. Standing on higher ground, protected by lofty walls and buttresses, its battlements completely command the city by some fifty feet. At its south-west corner, on the scarp of the hill running up to the Sher Darwaza, is the magazine, itself surrounded by strong walls and commanding both citadel and city, all of which positions are overlooked by the Sher Darwaza hill above. The royal palaces are situated in the Bala Hissar on the east side, overlooking the Peshawar road. Gardens were visible, scattered about the outskirts of the town, while with our glasses we could

make out several fields of huge cabbages which soon formed an acceptable addition to our stinted mess fare. The ladies of Kabul appeared to spend much time on their house-tops, particularly in the Kazilbosh part of the town. This we could see only by reason of our lofty position, some 800 feet above the city; from below all are quite hidden from view, each house-top being surrounded by a wall five feet high and about six inches thick supported by cross-beams. So thin do these walls appear, that one would think each earthquake would shake them down. Their very mobility and lightness seem to permit of their swaying without falling.

Kabul is very frequently visited with earthquakes, and it is said that on this account no striking buildings or mosques have been erected. On its southern and western aspect the city is closely invested with high hills. The northern side is open, while the eastern aspect is commanded by the low gravelly hills called by us the "Siah Sung heights," about 1,000 yards distant. These low hills run west to east, and then southwards, in the shape of a horse-shoe. In the hollow thus formed is the Afghan racecourse, and on the hill-sides the depressions used as rifle-butts.

At some distance Kabul is really surrounded on all sides by hills, rising in ridges, while snow-peaks were visible beyond the Kohistan hills. A small lake, two and a half miles long and a mile wide, was visible, about five miles distant to the north of the city. Between this lake and the city lay the

cantonment of Sherpur, which looked like a huge square fort with three sides completed, and bastions and turreted gateways. The fourth side was formed of low hills about 300 feet high, called the Behmaru hills, after the name of the village built at the eastern corner.

From the southern side of our position was obtained an uninterrupted view of the Chardey valley, beautifully clad in green vegetation, and magnificent poplars and willows, nearly every spot being under cultivation. This valley is dotted over with numerous fortified villages, and is one of the beautiful sights to be seen near Kabul. At the extreme west of the valley is the Arghandi Kotul, over which runs the road to Ghazni, Candahar, and Bamian.

The Siah Sung hills were being rapidly occupied by our troops, General Roberts having moved his camp there from the Bin-i-Hissar; the Royal and Horse Artillery occupied the north-western extremity, their guns completely sweeping the city some thousand yards away; the cavalry and transport animals occupied the ground below on the left of the Peshawar road, near the site of the Amir's old cantonments.

Having obtained leave to accompany a baggage-guard going to camp, and permission to stay the night at Siah Sung, I left with my tent, very pleased at the idea of getting on level ground again. The camp at Siah Sung presented a most lively aspect: merchants of all descriptions hawking their wares, fruit and vegetables being especially abundant.

Everyone seemed cheerful, and enjoying a well-deserved rest after our quick march and successful fight.

The private soldier was able to purchase for a small sum many luxuries, and to indulge perhaps too freely; at the heavily laden fruit stalls, large and luscious-looking bunches of grapes costing a mere song. The Head-Quarters camp occupied the S.W. corner of the hills, facing the time-gun and the band-stand, where the European bands played alternately, their music attracting many listeners who eagerly talked over the past and the future.

CHAPTER V.

The Third Occupation of the Bala Hissar.—The 5th Goorkhas march in first.—An Afghan Drawing-room.—General Roberts arrives, accompanied by the Amir's Son.—Delay occurs in reading the Proclamation.—The Ministers at last arrive.—They are afterwards arrested.—The Residency.—The Pit.—The Palaces in the Citadel.—Our Improvements made in 1880.

October 11th.—General Roberts made a private visit to the Bala Hissar and the ruins of the Residency; a wing of the 72nd Highlanders accompanied him, and the 14th Bengal Lancers were formed up outside.

October 12th.—The 5th Goorkhas received orders to occupy the courtyard connected with and partly enclosing the hill on which the magazine was placed. Two companies of the regiment and two mountain-guns, under Major Sym, remained behind on the summit of the Bala Hissar hill above.

Glad, indeed, were we all at leaving our cramped position on the heights. Our road ran down the steep slope of the hill inside the great city wall. After a

round-about course we finally reached the Lahore gate of the citadel. On defiling through the gateway, we entered a large bazaar with well-stocked shops on either side; the beautiful size and appearance of the grapes, of which there were a large number of stalls, was especially striking. The bazaar led into a large square, into which opened one or two palaces, as well as a garden, from which the mutineers are said to have rushed on the Residency. In this square was parked a number of guns, composed of different sizes and material, including some Armstrongs. The path now turned up a lane to the right towards the magazine, the royal stables lying on the left, and the pay-garden on the right. Near the gate of the magazine courtyard, on some higher rocky ground, was the Residency, the high parapet wall then standing and showing many bullet-marks on the surface, as well as the holes cut by the defenders to fire through. By 10 o'clock the regiment had formed up in the lower magazine. This enclosure is ovoid in shape, and on its outer side, overlooking the moat below, were armourers' shops, and beyond them four or more lines of barracks, previously occupied by the Amir's troops. The door of the magazine opened into this yard from some higher ground on the slope of the hill. The keys of this arsenal were handed over by two Afghans to Major Fitzhugh, who made a short inspection of the different store-houses, which disclosed very careless internal arrangements, large heaps of powder lying loose in one of the stores.

Captain Cook, V.C., and myself, now obtained leave to watch the great event of the day, memorable in the annals of Kabul, as, for the third time since 1837, the British army was about to take formal possession, and the British flag to be unfurled over the entrance of the citadel of Kabul. Quite ignorant of the geography of the fortress, we wandered in the direction of the main entrance, and, after traversing some passages and a long covered-way, we ascended a staircase, which opened into a room in one corner of the Amir's palace overlooking the city. Turning from here up a short staircase on our right, we entered a long room with a large window at one end. This chamber commanded a perfect view of the Peshawar road running straight away from it, along which the triumphant procession was to pass. The floor was covered with a Persian carpet (now in my possession, and purchased at a sale), and two couches. Three Afghans, probably servants, who were looking out on the scene, took themselves off, and we had the room to ourselves.

The Peshawar road below us, from the base of the Siah Sung hills to the bridge at the entrance of the Peshawar gate on our right, was lined by troops, a distance of nearly a mile. The 67th, the senior regiment, which in the afternoon occupied the Proclamation garden, and formed with the Goorkhas the garrison of the citadel, was posted at the gate-ways and its approaches; then came the 72nd, then the 92nd, and then the different native regiments, with the Cavalry Brigade lining the road nearest the camp. The

troops were dressed in their best, and the effect of a line of different uniforms, glistening in the sunshine, was very good. F-A Royal Horse Artillery was drawn up in front of an old cemetery opposite the entrance. Below our window was a small group of horsemen, composed of General Baker and his Staff, Captains Pole-Carew, Farwell, and Kane, awaiting the arrival of General Roberts. This group was afterwards joined by Mahomed Hyat Khan, C.S.I., an assistant-political officer, escorting some Afghan notables, who were dressed in various types of clothes and uniforms.

While awaiting the arrival of the procession we proceeded to examine a door on the right of our room, the hasp of which yielded to a little gentle manœuvring, and we found ourselves in a well-furnished drawing-room, pictured, carpeted, and ornamented, and evidently used by the ladies. Four glass chandeliers hung from the roof, while many and variegated coloured glass balls were suspended from the ceiling between them. Some of the furniture was very antique, particularly two uncomfortable-looking arm-chairs, with a crown on the back and two lion-heads on each arm. Copies of the "Graphic" newspaper were lying on two tables ; one, dated July 5th, 1879, contained a portrait of Cavagnari, another showed the Amir and his followers being photographed at Gundamuck. A thermometer by Newman, of Regent Street, London, was placed on another table. In a cheffonier

was a Bible with the back torn off, the life of the Duke of Wellington, and some other books, and three galvanic batteries. On a side table were two singing-birds in a gilt cage, which we vainly endeavoured to wind up. The pictures around the walls were chiefly German prints. On the chimney-piece was a copy of an original lithograph of the Amir Dost Mohomed, which I afterwards purchased at a sale. In an adjoining cupboard were several small boxes ; these we found contained china tea-sets packet in velvet, and of much value. The Goorkha orderlies who accompanied us were much delighted with everything, and would, no doubt, have carried off some mementoes of Yakoob, but Captain Cook would allow nothing to be removed, with the exception of a bottle of English sweetmeats, which the Goorkhas ate with much relish. A set of curious ivory chessmen much excited my cupidity, as a china set did Cook's, but we took nothing.

At 12 o'clock General Roberts appeared in sight at the end of the avenue of troops, who presented arms as he passed, while the band of each corps played its own peculiar selection. The Staff proceeded, the leading member on this eventful day being Lieutenant Charles Manners-Smith, of the Quartermaster-General's Department. On the right hand of the General rode Musa Khan the heir apparent, mounted on a fine grey Arab. The Amir himself had pleaded illness, or such was the account given for his absence, and had sent his son in his stead.

As the General entered the Peshawar gate the guns of F-A. Royal Horse Artillery thundered out a salute, and at the same time the British standard was unfurled on the staff erected over the gateway. The 67th Foot now closed up and marched inside the fortress behind the General, towards the royal garden, where they were to be quartered. Immediately after his arrival a proclamation was to have been read by the General in this garden. Two delays, however, took place. First, the gates of the garden were found not to have been opened. On gaining an entrance we found ourselves in a large well laid-out garden, on the southern side of which was a pretty house, chiefly built of wood, prettily inlaid and painted. General Roberts and the other Generals, and the Staff, proceeded up the staircase into a large open room, which overlooked the garden and the pretty tank below, while the rest of us occupied the smaller rooms looking into the bigger one. The band of the 67th, stationed below, now began to play, which we thought was part of the programme; but when selection followed selection, we began to wonder at last why the proclamation was not read. At length, after waiting nearly an hour, some Afghan Sirdars arrived, amongst them the Mustanfi, whose presence was required and who had purposely absented themselves. General Roberts then, in a clear voice, read out the proclamation in English, and it was afterwards translated into Persian. As soon as the reading was over, the four ministers

who had so delayed us were arrested, for two reasons; first, for not using their influence to prevent the attack on the Residency, and, secondly, for having incited the troops to oppose our advance. Their names were Habid Oolah Khan, the Mustanfi, or Finance Minister; the Wazir, Shah Mahomed Khan; the Governor of Kabul, Yahiya Khan; and Zakaria Khan, his brother-in-law, and Assistant-Governor. General Hills, .C.B., V.C., was proclaimed Military Governor of the city.

On leaving the garden, many of us visited the ruins of the ill-fated Residency, next to which the Goorkhas were quartered. A Pathan native officer of the first Punjab Infantry, then on leave in Kabul, accompanied us. The Residency may be described as two blocks of buildings, A and B, separated by a small roadway. On its west side lay the magazine, whose high parapet completely swept all the roofs of the houses occupied by the Embassy by some forty or fifty feet. On the north side the blocks were comparatively open, but on the north-eastern and eastern sides they were connected with the houses in the Bala Hissar. The southern side was open, and overlooked the moat and the country below towards Bin-i-Hissar. In block A, the nearest to the magazine, there were three divisions. No. 1, with small sheds and manure, had evidently been used as a stable; No. 2 formed quarters occupied by the cavalry; No 3 was a large courtyard with rooms in the northern and southern sides, into which opened the main

entrance with a covered way. Part of this building, which pleasantly overlooked the moat, had been used as a hospital, where the city people as well as the troops received treatment from Dr. Kelly. The walls on the east and southern side of this square showed many bullet-holes. The doorway from this courtyard opened into the roadway between the main blocks, and almost opposite it was a second doorway of room 1 in Block B. This room had been occupied by the infantry, and here a desperate resistance had evidently been made. Blood was spattered on the wall outside, and on the doorposts, and many human bones were lying about. These quarters had been almost entirely destroyed by fire. It was down the roadway between these two blocks that Hamilton twice or thrice led the charge on the guns. The greater portion of block B formed the quarters occupied by the Embassy. We gained entrance by following the roadway towards the moat, and creeping in through a small door at the corner, which admitted us into a fine square. The four stories on the north side had been destroyed by fire, and were in ruins. The fire-places, mantel-pieces, and walls and niches remained, and showed the dispositions of the rooms. On the south side, overlooking the moat, were the pleasant quarters used by Sir Louis Cavagnari. On the west side were servants' quarters and a Turkish bath, and bare walls formed the fourth side. Here the fight had raged desperately, and the eastern wall was riddled with bullets. We first ascended

the roof of Cavagnari's quarters, which was reached by a small covered staircase; near the exit of this staircase, on the roof, was a small chimney-stack. The staircase was deeply marked with blood, and the white walls and railings showed the imprint of fingers where the wounded and dying had clutched in their efforts to descend.

The native officer accompanying us explained that he was in the Residency during the first hour of the attack, and pointed out the chimney-stack, near the top of the staircase, from behind which Cavagnari, lying on his chest, had taken a shot and killed an Afghan firing at the Residency. He was soon after sent, by Cavagnari, with a message to the Amir, and showed us the door in the east side by which he had made his escape amidst a shower of bullets. He dilated much on the personal bravery of Cavagnari, than whom, as he truly said, he had never met a braver man. The Residency was certainly a melancholy spectacle. Cavagnari's quarters were the only rooms not in ruins. They had escaped the fire which destroyed the others, but had been stripped of everything. In the dark rooms on the western side were the traces of many bodies. In the high parapet wall (afterwards thrown down by the explosion), surrounding the main quarters, holes had been cut, through which the defenders fired their last rounds. It was behind this wall that Cavagnari is said to have fallen, struck by a bullet in the forehead. He was the first of the Europeans hit. It is some consolation to

think that his wound produced insensibility, and that he probably knew nothing of the after-occurrences. His body is supposed to have been buried under the ruins of the quarters destroyed by fire. When once the attack on the Residency commenced, and the surrounding buildings had been invested, except by the interference of the Amir, and a determined resistance, the Embassy had no chance of escape. No mercy could be expected from the Afghans. Escape was possible on the southern side by descending the wall with ropes, but here, according to the native officer's story, bodies of cavalry were drawn up to cut off any straggler.

From the magazine or western side a deadly fire was poured into the buildings, with perfect safety to the attackers. Bodies of soldiers occupied the ground leading from the only open place on the north side, while on the eastern side the Afghans swarmed on the roofs of the houses, and obtained entrance to the main square by cutting holes in the walls. They soon set fire to these quarters, and thus rendered the position of the defenders hopeless. The Residency must then have been completely gutted, and looted of every particle of property that escaped the fire, for next to nothing was found buried beneath the ruins, which were carefully searched and dug out.

On leaving the Residency our attention was directed to a large hole below the wall on the bank of the moat, showing that earth had been recently disturbed. Into that hole had been flung, from above, all the slain,

Hindoo, Mahommedan, and Christian alike, while the projecting skulls of camel and horse showed that the killed animals had shared the same grave. We all returned with melancholy stamped on our faces, and regret that so many good and brave men had fallen victims to the proverbial treachery and faithlessness of the Afghans, both of which qualities appear to be as characteristic of them as the love of fox-hunting and cricket are of the British character. During the next few days we were able to explore the rest of the citadel. Between the Residency and the Peshawar gate are numerous private houses. From the Peshawar gateway the whole of the eastern side, as well as a great part of the northern, is occupied by palaces, which overlook the moat below the city and the Siah Sung hills. The late Sher Ali's Palace comes first, consisting of a number of small, old-fashioned rooms, looking into a main centre square, in which is a garden. This palace was overlooked by the Residency quarters, and on this account our puppet Amir, Shah Soojah objected to our occupying the higher quarters in 1838. Next came the palace occupied by Yakoob Khan, his harem and his slaves. All were in good order, and some of the rooms were large and airy, one of them being used afterwards as a mess-room by the 67th and 9th Foot. The smaller rooms looked out on the main square and garden below. The lower quarters were built of stone, and were much cooler than the others, although there were marks of punkah-hooks in some of the ceilings.

In one corner was a Turkish bath, composed of three chambers, built of stone. On the northern side was the palace occupied by the late Shah Soojah, and named after him. It overlooked the city, and contained some fine airy rooms, which were used as a commissariat "store-room." On this side were several houses, occupied by the Amir's ministers. In the centre of the citadel was the large square before mentioned, into which opened the gate of the Proclamation Garden. A large house occupied this end of the garden, overlooking the square, in which were stored large quantities of uniform, accoutrements, band-instruments, carpets, &c.

To the west, and parallel with this garden, was another walled-in enclosure, with an audience-hall on the western side. In a shed on one side were two old dilapidated English carriages of very ancient make, as well as the gilt howdah in which Cavagnari had made his first entrance into the Bala Hissar.

A covered archway opened from this square into the main bazaar, on either side of which the houses were small and densely packed.

When first occupied by us the Bala Hissar was in a most filthy state, a condition generally attached to Eastern and Oriental magnificence in Afghanistan. The main bazaar, a wide street, was fairly clean, but the narrow bazaar through which Cavagnari had daily to ride to the Peshawar gate, was most unpleasant. The Royal Palaces, as well as the

Residency, were approached by narrow lanes, in which filth of every kind was piled in heaps, and one cannot wonder that Cavagnari looked forward to the time when a new Residency should be built outside the city. Indeed, nothing could be more disgusting than the approaches to the Royal Palaces. There is a vast deal of clap-trap talked about Oriental magnificence, and the approaches and surroundings of the Afghan palaces were to the Englishman as disgusting and degrading as the morals of the occupiers were said to be.

During the spring and summer of 1880 more than one half of the citadel was dismantled, and the filth of ages satisfactorily buried. The chief bazaar and all the smaller surrounding houses were pulled down, the ground obtained being used as a parade. A fine road was cut straight through the citadel, demolishing the smaller bazaars, and traversing the two gardens to the Lahore gate. Nearly all the palaces whose walls were sound were left untouched, so that from outside little change was discernible. The citadel was divided by a loop-holed wall into two squares. The walls and the defences all round were put into good repair by our engineers. The upper slopes of the magazine were terraced and manned by heavy guns, which completely swept the city, and the fortress was thus rendered as nearly as possible impregnable to any Afghan force attacking it from below.

The English occupation in 1880 had converted

a useless tumble-down fort into a position of much strength ; and although in so doing we have left our indelible mark at Kabul, yet at a future time, should Russia or our enemies obtain Kabul, by fair means or foul, we may find our own improvements have been made to our cost.

CHAPTER VI.

The Abdication of the Amir.—His conduct at Charasiab.—His Position in the British Camp.—His Resignation accepted.—The Inquiry Commission.—He is afterwards closely guarded.—His departure to Mussoorie.

“UNEASY lies the head that wears the crown.” It will be remembered that on the 12th October, the day of our triumphant entry into the Bala Hissar, the Amir did not accompany General Roberts, but sent his son instead. His reason for so doing now proved to be that he was about to abdicate. The Amir Yakoob Khan had certainly not lived a happy life. Mistrusted by his own father for some years, he had been kept a close prisoner in Kabul. His spirit was evidently crushed and he was unfitted to control his own treacherous people. His sense of incapacity, coupled with a possible fear of punishment at the hands of the British for (to say the least of it) culpable cowardice and indecision during the attack on the Residency on September 3rd, 1879, was too much for him, and he determined to abdicate.

Early on the morning of the 12th October, the Amir walked into General Roberts's camp, accompanied by only two attendants, and expressed his determination to resign the Amirship. He said that he had intended to do so at Kushi, where he first joined our camp, but had allowed himself to be overpersuaded. He was in low spirits ; said his life had been a miserable one ; that he would rather be a grass-cutter in the English camp than ruler of Afghanistan ; and he begged that he might live in the General's camp, his own being in the plain below

General Roberts, probably thinking that such a serious act was unpremeditated, and, perhaps, due to a fit of melancholy, ordered a tent to be prepared for him, and a cure for a great many Englishmen's ills, viz. a good breakfast ; after which he requested him to think over the matter for some hours.

At a second interview at 10 o'clock, the hour appointed on the previous day for the Amir to come to the General's camp for the purpose of accompanying him to the Bala Hissar, the Amir again stated that he had quite decided to give up the throne of Kabul ; that he could not possibly accompany the General to the Bala Hissar, but that he would send his eldest son, and all his ministers would be in attendance. General Roberts, finding his mind determined, told him that he would telegraph to the Viceroy for instructions, as, of course, he could not be forced to remain as Amir against his will.

It should here be borne in mind that in the Treaty of Gundamuck, one of the special points gained by the Amir was that our army should not advance on Kabul. Now matters were altered. Cavagnari, our ambassador, who with him had formed the treaty, had been murdered, and the Amir had done little to save him.

The victorious British army was encamped before Kabul, and, on that day, the Bala Hissar, the pride of the Afghans, was about to be triumphantly entered, while the ruler of the conquered country was to ride side by side with the victor. Always an unhappy man, this last act could not be endured. The Amir would not come ; he said he would send his son, who came. But his influence with his ministers was so small that they were only brought there under pressure.

The Blue Book contains one statement as regards Yakooob Khan's conduct which is of the more value as it was written shortly after our arrival at Kabul. His conduct at Charasiab is thus described (p. 154): "I think it desirable to mention here that some doubt has been thrown upon the conduct of His Highness the Amir in connection with the fight at Charasiab. It is said that Sirdar Nek Mahomed, uncle of Yakooob Khan, who had been left in charge of Kabul during His Highness's absence, came out and had an interview with His Highness on the 5th; that he was directed to return at once and stir up the troops and city-people to oppose us, and that

the action of the 6th was fought in direct obedience to the Amir's orders."

P. 166, General Roberts.—"This suspicion has, to a certain extent, been strengthened by the production of a letter, supposed to have been written by Yakoob's uncle, Nek Mahomed Khan, in which he states that he was personally ordered by the Amir to raise a holy war against us. A copy of this letter has also been submitted for the information of His Excellency the Governor-in-Council. It is not, however, conclusive proof of Yakoob's bad faith, for there is some doubt as to its being authentic, and it was brought to me by Sirdar Wali Mahomed, whose feelings towards Yakoob are openly unfriendly."

After the arrival of the Amir in our camp at Kushi, a European guard was placed over him, really at first as a guard of honour. Afterwards, however, when doubts as to his good faith had been aroused, he was more carefully looked after. With native suspicion, and probably a guilty conscience regarding the murder of Cavagnari, he may, perhaps, thinking himself a prisoner on the 5th October, have ordered the opposition arrayed against us on all sides. The failure of his attempts to delay our advance, the defeat of his troops at Charasiab; and our occupation of the Bala Hissar, must have clearly proved to him that his last cards were played out.

On the 28th October his resignation was accepted. Between the 12th and 28th October the Amir had been practically under no restraint. During this

interval "certain evidence had been brought before the Inquiry Commission" which tended to prove the Amir guilty of culpable weakness and neglect during the attack on the Residency, and to show that he was using his influence against us while our forces were advancing to Charasiab. Of this the Amir had probably heard something, and General Roberts was assured by Sirdar Wali Mahomed that he would attempt to escape. Indeed, a story reached Sherpur that this attempt was frustrated only just in time, as one day the Amir's horse and two of his followers' were found saddled and bridled ready for flight.

After this time the Amir was placed under comparatively close restraint, and his camp was moved inside Sherpur when the Siah Sung position was abandoned. On the evening of the 30th November he was informed that the date of his departure for India had been fixed for the following morning. At daybreak of the 1st December 1879 the wretched man left Kabul in charge of Captain A. H. Turner, a political officer, under an escort of cavalry changed every six or ten miles; and without any attempt at rescue, or misadventure, he reached Peshawar on the night of the 8th. Yakoob Khan comes to swell the long list of political prisoners and Afghan pensioners, the result of our proceedings in Afghanistan. His advent helps the expenditure of many thousands of pounds that might be spent on better and more hopeful men. He is now comfort-

ably quartered at one of the hill stations, Mussoorie, where everything that he can express a wish for is supplied to him, and where let us allow him to sink into oblivion, surrounded by his wives, slaves, and other Afghan appendages.

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CHAPTER VII.

The Magazine at Cabul.—Captain Shafto.—The first Explosion.—The second Explosion.—Inside the Magazine, by a Survivor.—The Goorkha Sentry.—The Effects of the Explosion.—Wonderful Escape of the Great Powder Magazine.—The 72nd and the Goorkhas.—The Goorkha Soldier.—Recovery of the Bodies of Captain Shafto and the Soubadar Major.—The Bala Hissar is abandoned.

HARDLY had the garrison of the fortress at Kabul begun to settle down to their quarters when they were expelled from them by the explosion of part of the magazine, an accident attended with miraculously little loss of life.

The magazine was built on the slope of a hill, to the south side of the Bala Hissar. On the north side it overlooked the Proclamation Garden, occupied by the 67th Foot, by some eighty feet ; and on the south the ovoid courtyard held by the Goorkhas, by about fifteen feet. It thus occupied a position between these two regiments, but was very close to the Goorkhas, whose officers' tents were pitched under the wall.

At the east end was a massive wall with two substantial buttresses at each side, directly overlooking the Residency. The door of the magazine opened into the courtyard occupied by the Goorkhas, on some rising ground. Outside it was a large room occupied by the Goorkha quarter-guard.

On the outer side of this courtyard, built on the edge of the wall over the moat, was a line of old houses, which commenced on the left of the chief gateway. These had been used as armourers' shops, and were connected with each other by dark cellar-like passages. The anvils, furnaces, and other blacksmith's tools left in them were found to be of a very rough description. The work turned out consisted of cartridges of all sizes and shapes. Solid brass snider-cases were picked up in different stages of formation, and many other varieties of brass cartridges, including express cartridges, as well as sporting-cases for No. 12 and other gun-bores, mixed up with patterns of English cartridges which were being copied. Beyond these workshops were four rows of mud barracks, and beyond this for one hundred yards an open space overlooking a cabbage-garden below, beyond the moat. While the rows of Afghan barracks—which were in a most filthy state—were being cleaned out, the Goorkhas' tents were pitched in the open space between them and the magazine. The largest armourer's shop was converted into a mess-house for the officers, a somewhat dingy room, but giving a good look-out over the country below.

The officers' tents were pitched in a line close under the magazine wall, on a small piece of levelled ground. The parapet of this wall looked in a very shaky condition, and many an anxious look was cast at it, for we had all heard of the Kabul earthquakes.

The magazine itself consisted of an irregular square formed of mud houses, with wooden doors. The houses on the north side formed a longer line than those on the south. The west side was open. Close to the end of the north side, running from north to south, was a detached mud house with three doors. This constituted the chief powder-depôt, and contained upwards of four hundred tons of this dangerous material. The houses in the square contained miscellaneous articles of war, very much mixed up and carelessly arranged, fuses lying about the floor in some places, heaps of powder in others, especially on the north side, while the east barrack between the two bastions contained large quantities of shells and many hundred thousands of ball-ammunition. The whole was under the charge of Captain Shafto, R.A., a most careful and hard-working officer.

Between the 12th and 16th October he visited the magazine on several occasions, taking stock. He generally paid a visit to the Goorkha mess-house, where we often told him how pleased we should be if he could only remove the deadly stuff that lay between us and the 67th below. The day before the accident, when blowing up some loose powder in the

city, his eyebrows and whiskers were accidentally very much singed, on account of which we duly chaffed him the next morning when he came in to take stock—as we little thought, for the last time. He was dressed in a flannel suit and soft cricket-shoes. Soon after commencing his work he came out to get a glass of water; and he was never seen alive by us again. That morning, by some providential interference, owing to the shaky look of the wall, it had been determined to remove the officers' tents from underneath it to the open courtyard. This was carried out at 12 o'clock, though at the time of the explosion a certain quantity of baggage had not been removed. Previous to this my duties called me to Siah Sung, and while sitting talking to a sick officer there, at half-past 1 o'clock, a great explosion took place, which shook the hill we were sitting on violently. A European orderly ran up and said: "That is a good explosion, if you like, sir."

A dense volume was now seen over the south-east corner of the city. At first the idea struck one that Shafto had been blowing up some more powder in the city; but on the wind shifting and raising the cloud, it was evident that the smoke was issuing from the magazine. Many a heart jumped for the moment, as there seemed to anyone but little chance of the Goorkhas having escaped. My Arab soon carried me into the Bala Hissar. Dismounting in a narrow lane close to the magazine, I first met my khitmutgur holding his jaw in a melancholy way.

He had fallen over a wall in the darkness that ensued, some twelve feet, and broken some teeth. All the officers who happened to be in the mess-house at the time escaped without hurt. Snider cartridges were now constantly exploding independently and in volleys inside the smoke.

It was evident to Major Fitzhugh, who, next to Shafto, knew best the position of the contents of the magazine, that only part of the magazine had blown up, and that the great powder-store, some 400 tons, had yet to explode. The constant small explosions going on showed that this might occur at any time, with the most frightful results. An order was therefore issued for the citadel to be evacuated. The Goorkhas were divided, part descending through a hole cut in the wall by the moat on the south side, the remainder marching through the bazaar to the Peshawar gate, where they were formed up.

The loss sustained by the Goorkhas had not then been ascertained, though the chief force of the explosion had expended itself on their side, and the treacherous wall from beneath which our tents had been removed that morning was lying a mass of ruin. The 67th Foot had received a volley of stones over their garden, but, providentially, hardly anyone was hurt; the European sentry stationed on the roof of the house in which the Ministers were imprisoned being the only man killed. He is said to have been struck by a splinter and knocked off the roof, a considerable fall.

In perfect order this fine regiment fell in under

trying circumstances, for all now knew that the big magazine had yet to go up. They marched out through the Peshawar gate, taking the Afghan prisoners with them. In anticipation of the second explosion the Goorkhas were withdrawn to some open ground at a safe distance on the Bin-i-Hissar road, where the Bala Hissar, grim with dense volumes of smoke, could be safely observed. An hour passed, and the explosion did not take place. A second hour came round, but beyond the constant explosion of cartridges going on, no further sign of the end appeared; so much so that, at 3.30 p.m., the Adjutant was despatched with a working-party towards the moat, in the hope of saving some property. His party had only proceeded a few hundred yards, when a terrific explosion took place, and the earth was violently shaken. A thick volume of smoke and stones rose up from the magazine some 600 feet high, huge boulders of compact masonry being hurled hundreds of yards through the air, and even at the long distance of half a mile, which intervened between us and the Bala Hissar, we heard the small patter of stones, like a sudden shower of rain, falling on the ground around. All eyes were now fixed on the magazine, and when the dense black smoke slowly rolled angrily away, the eastern wall, with its huge turrets on each side, was seen a crumbled heap of ruins, while from the base of the wall volumes of red fire were constantly belched through the gaps, like the guns of

a frigate in action; this, the curious feature of the second explosion, was caused by the red-hot shells exploding one after another.

At the time of the first explosion, the Goorkha officers and some guests were just about to sit down to lunch, when a terrible heave was felt, followed by a deafening noise, and instant complete darkness. Although the mess-house was only fifteen paces from the end of the line that exploded, no one was killed or even injured. All knew, of course, what had occurred. The ordinary entrance door was blocked up, and the lunching party, wondering at their escape, groped their way through the line of workshops adjoining the mess to the open air. Lieutenant Trench, in the darkness, fell over the roadway near the gate, and bruised his face. The charger of Captain C., who had come to lunch with me, a valuable English horse, was so terrified at the noise, that, breaking away from the syce who held him, he leaped over the moat wall, some eight feet high, and was killed on the stones below. Most of the other horses and mules broke loose at the second explosion, and galloped about during the night; and the syces and muleteers, who were shut up here, must have passed a night to be long remembered—explosions, more or less severe, going on the whole time.

The description of what was going on inside the magazine square, given me afterwards by the native writer who was employed in assisting Captain Shafto, may, perhaps, be read with interest.

At the time of the explosion Captain Shafto was engaged in sorting the contents of the four rooms forming the south side of the hollow square, which may be numbered as 1, 2, 3, 4. Engaged with him were seven kalassies. In the upper part of the square, on a little higher ground about twenty yards off, were Shafto's three mounted orderlies belonging to the 5th Punjab Cavalry. At the lower corner of the square were fifteen camels with five or six drivers, and near the centre four muleteers with some mules.

Shortly before the explosion, the native writer, who had finished sorting No. 1 room, in which were old iron and artillery stores, locked the door, and after reporting that he had done so to Captain Shafto, joined the mounted orderlies. Captain Shafto was now in room No. 2 with a kalassie, while six other kalassies were counting in room No. 3. Pacing the roof over rooms Nos. 1 to 3 was a Goorkha sentry to whom we are probably indebted for true information concerning the explosion. Pausing in his walk over No. 2 or 3 room, he heard for a second or more a hissing sort of noise, and in the next he was blown up in the air and came down alive on the top of the ruins of the eastern wall with some severe wounds in the head. From here he crept along to the edge of the moat, and was eventually carried down by a comrade.

By this explosion all the rooms, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, and the wall adjoining, were blown up, the force of the explosion being chiefly on this side where the

resistance was felt ; apparently the other two sides of the square were not injured then. Poor Shafto and the kalassie in No. 2, as well as all in No. 3, must have been instantly killed. His body was afterwards found buried under the wall on the south, though his pistol was picked up in the 67th garden on the north, some 200 yards the opposite way. All the camels and their drivers were instantly killed, as well as two out of the four muleteers ; the other two were badly wounded, one severely in the head, and the other poor wretch had both his legs broken. In this state the latter dragged himself up towards the munshi and the troopers, who eventually carried them into the courtyard below. The writer standing near the troopers was blown some twenty feet in the air, and escaped with a severe shaking ; one of the troopers received some internal injury to the chest, and his horse was wounded in the head. An unfortunate fate overtook these two men, who, together with the munshi, had done their duty well in rescuing the wounded drivers from the inner magazine. After getting clear of the magazine, one of them feeling ill and exhausted, they sat down to rest outside on the edge of the moat near the Peshawar gate. The second explosion now took place ; one was struck and killed by a falling missile, and the other mortally wounded.

With the second explosion it was considered by all that the great magazine of powder had exploded. Strange to say, however, on the next day it was discovered standing intact, though the mud walls

were scorched and charred, and only a few yards of space intervened between it and the end of the north side of the square, then in ruins and burning subterraneously.

The loss sustained by the Goorkhas that day, though small in actual number, fell very heavily on the regiment. Sitting outside the guard-room and close under the fatal wall from which our tents had been removed, were the Soubadar-Major,* five pay-sergeants, and one corporal, engaged in counting out the regimental chest. They, as well as another corporal and five sepoy in the guard-room, were immediately buried under the ruins. Eight Goorkhas, including the sentry who was blown up, and six camp-followers were wounded. This small loss of life is really miraculous.

About 5 o'clock in the evening orders were received for the regiment to march to Siah Sung. No one was in a cheerful mood. Some valuable lives had been sacrificed, and both men and officers thought all their scanty kit must have been lost. Little, however, was really missing, the tents in the courtyard suffering most injury from huge stones driven through them. A brass helmet in my tent was completely flattened by a missile. We now, of course, had little or nothing with us, and a cold night on the ground was in prospect for the men. The 72nd Highlanders, who had twice fought the Afghans, with the sturdy

* Senior native officer.

little Nepalese, and between whom a great friendship existed, behaved in a very generous way on this occasion. Each man lent his great-coat to a Goorkha, and they provided each company with a sheep. Going along in the dark, I stumbled up against some men of the 72nd, dragging along two sheep, who addressed me: "Sir, is there any objection to our giving these to the Goorkhas? We belong to A and B company of the 72nd, and we have brought two sheep for A and B company of the Goorkhas." This practical token of friendship was appreciated as it deserved to be. The Goorkha is certainly a most jolly little soldier, and possesses many sterling qualities, which make him a greater favourite with the British soldier than any other natives.

That day an incident occurred, showing his kindness to a little dog, an animal they are especially fond of. On the morning of the explosion a little terrier of mine had swallowed a pigeon-bone, which stuck in its gullet, and had to be forced down, causing the animal much pain. After the first explosion, when part of the Goorkhas were escaping from the courtyard down the wall, one of them remembered my dog, and catching it up, placed it inside his coat, and carried it away with him beyond the moat, where I afterwards, to my surprise, found it lying panting inside a little circle of Goorkhas, who were commiserating it. The incidents which followed made me, for the time, quite forget all about the dog. The next morning, when

passing a group of Goorkhas, the little chap who had brought down the dog with him called out loudly to attract my attention, holding up the little animal, which was quite dead. He said he had kept it inside his coat for warmth, until it died at 4 o'clock.

On another occasion, when returning from a long march, Billy, an aged bull-dog, which had belonged to the regiment for years, fell out quite exhausted, and could not keep up with the men. They vainly tried to encourage him on, but he was too old to respond. A strong little Goorkha was then deputed to the officer commanding for leave to take off his accoutrements, which was granted, and old panting Billy was carefully shouldered and carried along. I believe half a company would have stayed behind rather than have lost him.

These two little incidents show one of the good traits in their character. Though small in stature, the Goorkha is sturdy and brave. He is very fond of fishing and shooting, in both of which sports he excels. He proves an excellent soldier, yielding and obedient, and forms strong friendship with the European. Though Hindoo, it is a remarkable fact, that the Goorkha soldier hardly ever makes friends with other classes of Hindoos, or other classes of natives. The only friendship he appeared to form was with the British soldier, whom he attempts to imitate as much as possible, and is often met with smoking a short pipe, a gift from a Britisher. With his little forage cap set well on the side of his head he walks along

firmly and boldly, looking as if he felt conscious of his proud position as a soldier; while his broad, honest, though often ugly face, shows much latent fun peeping out from the eyes. As a rule, his disposition is cheerful. A long march, cold, heat, are endured equally well, and his cheery laugh and conversation seem never to cease. I have now served with every class of native, and, viewed either as a warrior, a sportsman, or a companion, the Goorkha is, in my idea, the best of all.

The reason of this unfortunate explosion will never be exactly known. A fuse accidentally trodden on, and igniting some loose powder, was the probable cause, and would correspond with the noise heard by the sentry before he was blown up. The presence of the four Afghan ministers in the house close by, in the garden below, tends to negative the idea that the explosion was designed by local treachery; for, had not the detached powder-magazine escaped in the most miraculous way, not only would few of the 67th Foot and 5th Goorkhas have survived, but the Afghan ministers must certainly have been buried in the ruins of the house, which was in a very shaky state.

By the destruction of the magazine square we lost a vast quantity of war material, including nearly a hundred thousand rounds of Snider cartridges of English manufacture, and a great quantity of locally-made Snider ammunition.

On the next day, Dr. Isadore Bourke and his

ambulance corps were busy at work excavating the ruins, and poor Shafto's body was found and brought into camp. His face and chest had been much shattered, and his appearance was so altered that he was only recognisable by the marks on his stockings. He was buried with military honours on the west side of Siah Sung, the generals and a large number of officers attending his funeral; for he was a great favourite, and by his premature death the royal regiment lost a most promising officer. The difficulties in exhuming the bodies were much increased by the pestilential fumes arising from the dead animals inside. The body of the Soubadar-Major of the Goorkhas was recovered; he was a very old and respected officer, and, in accordance with the wish of the men of the regiment, he received a military funeral. His body was placed in a coffin,* the regimental band was allowed to attend, and a salute proportionate to his rank fired over his grave.

On the 10th November 1879, the military guards over the Bala Hissar were withdrawn, and the custody of the citadel and magazine entrusted to sixty native chowkedars, under the orders of Najaf Ali Khan, head man of the Arab community in Kabul. The destruction of the powder had been commenced by the Sappers and Miners. Small quantities were first flushed with water inside the magazine. It was then

* Cremation is generally practised by the Hindoos.

carried outside and shot down into the moat below. The flushing water had to be brought from a long distance, and the process was therefore very slowly carried out.

CHAPTER VIII.

Kabul City, 1879.—Its Manufactures.—Its Vegetables and Fruit.—The Afghan Lady.—General Hill's Governorship.—Relief of the Shutargardan by General Gough.—More Troops reach Kabul.—Sherpur Cantonment.—Water-supply.—Its Surroundings in 1879 and 1841.—The Behmaru Lake.—November Climate in Kabul.—Cold Winds.—Failure of Rum.—The Telegraph.

ON the 13th October 1879 the city of Kabul was triumphantly entered, General Roberts and a brilliant staff leading the way, followed by all the infantry regiments of his division except those forming the garrison of the citadel. The streets were densely lined with inhabitants, whose behaviour was quiet and orderly. The rich Hindoo merchants, who chiefly occupy the Shor Bazaar, welcomed us heartily, and appeared very pleased at the prospect of our rule. These unfortunate men will not give us the same welcome on a future occasion, unless we determine to occupy Kabul permanently, for they can hardly ever forget the manner in which we were obliged to abandon them during our imprisonment in Sherpur.

This bird's-eye view of Kabul from the Bala Hissar hill, given a few pages back, showed the absence of all striking-looking buildings in the city. If the reader will try and follow me inside the city, he will observe the same thing, though the streets and the shops contained many interesting objects.

Entering by the Peshawar gate, held by a guard of the 28th Punjab Native Infantry, leaving the main road on our right, let us turn to the left, passing through a few hundred yards of a narrow street lined with shops, till we enter the richest bazaar in the city, called the Shor Bazaar. The intervening shops show a display of old ironware, where curios can be picked up; and one small street is almost devoted to leather-work and horse-clothing. The Shor Bazaar runs on the south side of the city from east to west, and is mostly covered in. Here shops containing valuable cloths and clothing material were collected, chiefly at the east end, where it opens out close to the Bala Hissar. English as well as Indian made clothes, gloves, socks, and handkerchiefs could also be procured. Towards the west end were boot-makers' shops, disclosing lines of Kabul ladies' shoes; second-hand shops, displaying old china, pictures, trays, and miscellaneous stores, containing Russian china, looking-glasses, cards, beads, &c.; while at either end were butchers' shops, fruiterers, and vegetable stalls, and, if my recollection is good, the chief stone-carver for grave-stones had his store in this street. Another bazaar ran through the heart of the city, east and

west, from the Peshawar gate, lined with shops on either side. The first portion was chiefly occupied by bakers and sweetmeat-makers; the centre shops exposed for sale ironware of sorts, brass-work and silver, and there were many old-leather shops, where Kabul whips were sold. The handles of some of these whips are very handsomely mounted, and show much variety in taste and workmanship; the price varies greatly, and the cheaper kind are used by the Afghan cavalry in place of spurs. The bazaar on the northern or Sherpur side contained cooking-shops, from which some sausages, mince-meat, and different varieties of dishes were turned out. The sausages, and mince-meat, were most carefully prepared and cooked in a few minutes, for the passer by, over small charcoal stoves in the front of each shop, a chupatee* being used as a plate. These different bazaars were connected by small squares, into which several streets opened. Near the centre of the city was a large covered dome; here was to be seen the chief display of haberdashery, silk handkerchiefs of every colour and style, silk of different kinds, trinkets, toys, beads. The handkerchiefs, said to be made of light Bokhara silk, were of the most gaudy colours, yellow and red especially predominating; they were of different sizes, and many hundreds were sold to the British.

One square was devoted to the sale of vegetables, and poultry and game of different kinds in their

* Unleavened cake.

season, as well as large quantities of pigeons. Wild duck, teal, and especially great numbers of sand-grouse—the large variety—were sold during the winter, the season for the latter lasting about fourteen days. Larks and sparrows, which made excellent pies, were also procured. I even one day procured a full snipe, probably caught in a noose. Another small square was entirely occupied by skin-merchants, who temptingly exposed beautiful rugs and fur coats. The grey squirrel rugs were most in demand, owing to their pretty colour, softness, and pliability; each cost £6.

A third square was devoted to the sale of poshteens, or coats made of dyed sheep-skins, which commanded a good price, according to their size and softness, but more particularly the design-work on the sleeves, chest, and back. Poshteen boots, socks, and gloves were also sold here, as well as rugs, numbdas, and carpets. These shops occupied the sides of the square, which was the largest of all, while in the centre were arranged stalls for second-hand coats, carpets, and all sorts of odds and ends.

A fourth square, near the Kotwali, was entirely devoted to the sale of pottery and hookas.

Turkish baths were situated at each quarter or mahullah of the city; their outside appearance was generally gloomy, filthy, and unpleasant in the extreme. Their interior was reported to be cleaner, and they obtained some patronage.

The manufactures peculiar to the city of Kabul

are very few. Poshteens and leather-work of all kinds are the principal. The valuable carpets and numbdas exposed for sale, as well as the silk, are all imported. Muskets, rifles, and fuse-guns are largely manufactured. A cannon-foundry existed in the city, which had turned out Armstrong, rifled, and brass smooth-bore guns of different calibres ; Kabul silver-work could also be obtained.

Fruit of many kinds filled the market during the season, which commences early in June or the end of May. The small sweet mulberry matures first. Thousands of mulberry trees are grown in the suburbs of Kabul and the districts around, and their fruit forms a considerable item in the food of the poorer class of people. Large quantities are dried on the house-tops, and eaten in the winter, while a kind of flour is made from a portion. Cherries are obtained plentifully in June and July. When quartered in the Pughman Valley with General Charles Gough's brigade we made large quantities of cherry brandy in our mess, which if kept a proper length of time would no doubt have proved of the first quality. The heat and our thirst, however, rendered us impatient, and the liquor was hardly ever allowed to stand beyond three days. Peaches, apricots, and plums succeeded, but were procured in smaller quantities. At the end of the summer and autumn the grape appeared in the market. This fruit attains a gigantic size, and is most sweet and luscious to the taste. The grapes at Candahar are, however, if anything, finer. In the

suburbs of Kabul were many vineyards, and great care was displayed in guarding and watching their growth. Those near Kabul were generally planted on the slopes of low hills or rising ground, which was watered by a diverted water-channel. A high wall surrounds each enclosure, built partly as a precaution against thieves, but chiefly to protect the young vines from the wind, which blows with great force in the summer afternoons. Several varieties of the fruit were grown, including a small sweet grape without stones. I never met the muscatel variety.

Of vegetables the cabbage formed a very large market staple, and grew to an enormous size. Although this plant thrived so well, we never saw either the cauliflower or Brussel-sprout.* Beet-root grew in great profusion and perfection, as well as potatoes. Lettuces, cucumbers, vegetable marrows, melons, and this class of fruit, were also grown in large quantities. We also saw fields of the broad bean.

In 1841 Lady Sale says: "The potatoes thrive well and will be a very valuable addition to the cuisine. The cauliflowers, artichokes, and turnip radishes are very fine, and peculiarly mild in their flavour ; they are all from seed we brought from our garden at Kurnaul, near Delhi. The Cabul lettuces are hairy and inferior to those cultivated by us ; but

* Broccoli is very common at Kelat and Quetta.

the Cabul cabbages are superior, being milder, and the red cabbage from English seed grows well."

The same writer was much struck with the enormous size of the grapes. "Selected grapes off a bunch of those in Kohistan, have been known to weigh 200 grains ; the largest I ever weighed myself was 127 grains."

In the hot months snow-ice is sold very cheaply, and huge blocks are used by the shop-keepers to preserve their edibles. Ices are also made and sold. This stock of ice is procured by storing the last fall of snow in February or March. The snow is then gathered up in baskets, and flung into square open pits made for the purpose, about forty feet square and thirty feet deep. The floor and sides of these pits are covered with matting. As the snow is thrown in, it is stamped down and rammed ; when sufficiently full, four or five feet of dry grass is thrown in and packed, and the surface covered in with matting. There are several of these pits on the southern side of the city, and two on the western, one close to the base of the Koh-i-Asmai heights. A few of them had a wall built round the summit, and some were partly roofed in.

Wine and inferior spirits are manufactured in the city. The wine is intoxicating, and is not very palatable, as its flavour smacks strongly of dry or mouldy raisins. Still it found some supporters and drinkers, and *de gustibus non est disputandum*.

The chief pleasure in shopping in Kabul lay in

picking up curios amongst the many and most unlikely-looking shops. Curious arms, accoutrements, coats of mail, helmets, powder-horns, flasks, and leathers, were much sought after, as well as the many varieties of Russian and Brummagen china. This Russian china sold very quickly, nearly every officer returning from his first visit to the city with a red teapot under his arm, bearing the Russian mark on the bottom, so that in the summer they were only procured with difficulty and at high prices. The Russians are deeply indebted to us for a large sale of their crockery, although some wags affirmed that the same teapots were procurable in Birmingham.

The loaves of sugar exposed for sale in the bazaar nearly all bore Russian marks, and had been brought from Bokhara.

One important article has been omitted, viz. gunpowder, of which so large a quantity was found stored in the Bala Hissar. This is made chiefly from charcoal of the willow-tree. For this purpose many acres of land between Sherpur and the city had been cultivated with this tree, which had been planted in long rows with care and regularity by the late Shere Ali, for the willow is considered to yield the best charcoal for making gunpowder.

The main streets and bazaars of Kabul, are in many places narrow, and very dirty, and when snow or rain falls are simply filthy, especially in the squares, where the snow is collected and allowed to melt, forming a foul, offensive pool. But, if the main

streets are bad, the side streets are simply dreadful in their filth. Why Kabul is not yearly visited by a pestilence is really wonderful. The fierce rays of the sun, and the burning hot winds which daily prevail in the hottest months, no doubt dry up the streets rapidly, and so, assisted by a small rainfall, pestilences do not occur as constantly as one would expect.

Towards the afternoon of a fine day the main bazaars present a most lively and animated appearance, and are densely and incongruously crowded: camels, elephants, which with their huge loads just clear the sides, Yaboos, horsemen, Afghans, Englishman, natives, all jostling along in a busy stream. All European officers carried their revolvers, while the private carried his rifle.

The almost total absence of women in the crowd is one of the peculiar features of Kabul. Few but beggar-women are visible, whose features, distorted by disease, are exposed only to excite the compassion of the passer-by. The Afghan, though he by report has not much respect for a woman, is, however, intensely jealous of his wife. Looked upon as useful servants, and necessary mothers of sons, those even of the higher class are seldom educated beyond the reading of the Koran, while they are generally confined to the house or house-top. The approach of an Englishman appears to be much dreaded by the women, who either hide their faces, or run away, especially should one of their men be standing near. I have often, when out shooting or walking, passed

a house and seen the women run inside, or out of sight, warned by a word or gesture from a man standing near, who stares hatefully at the passer-by, as if he thought he was about to intrude upon the sanctity of his hearth.

In our former occupation a different state of things existed, which no doubt accounted partly for the happy way in which our army settled down in 1838, when our relations with the people were much more friendly and less strained.

During the first period of our occupation, Major-General Hills, C.B., V.C., dispensed justice and carried on the civil administration of the city. His judgment-hall was held by a strong guard of one of the native regiments from Sherpur. His hours of attendance were from 10 A.M. until 4 o'clock. His administration was popular with the natives, and particularly so amongst the Europeans, who were able to appeal to his decision against the exorbitant demands often made by merchants for their goods. The threat of taking up the grasping shop-keeper, with his ware, before the Governor, generally procured the article at its proper price. After the assumption of the City Governorship by our newly-appointed protégé, Sirdar Wali Mahomed, Sher Ali's brother, the prices of articles rapidly rose, until one-third more than their former prices was asked, while the vendors became imperious in their demands, and, shortly before our departure, often insulting in their demeanour.

The search for the bodies of the ill-fated Embassy

was carried on during the month of October by fatigue parties of the 67th Foot. The body of Major Cavagnari, which it was hoped would have been discovered under the ruins of the room into which he was said to have been carried after receiving his wound, was not found, and only a few articles were unearthed. The search in the big grave which was opened on the edge of the moat proved equally unsatisfactory.

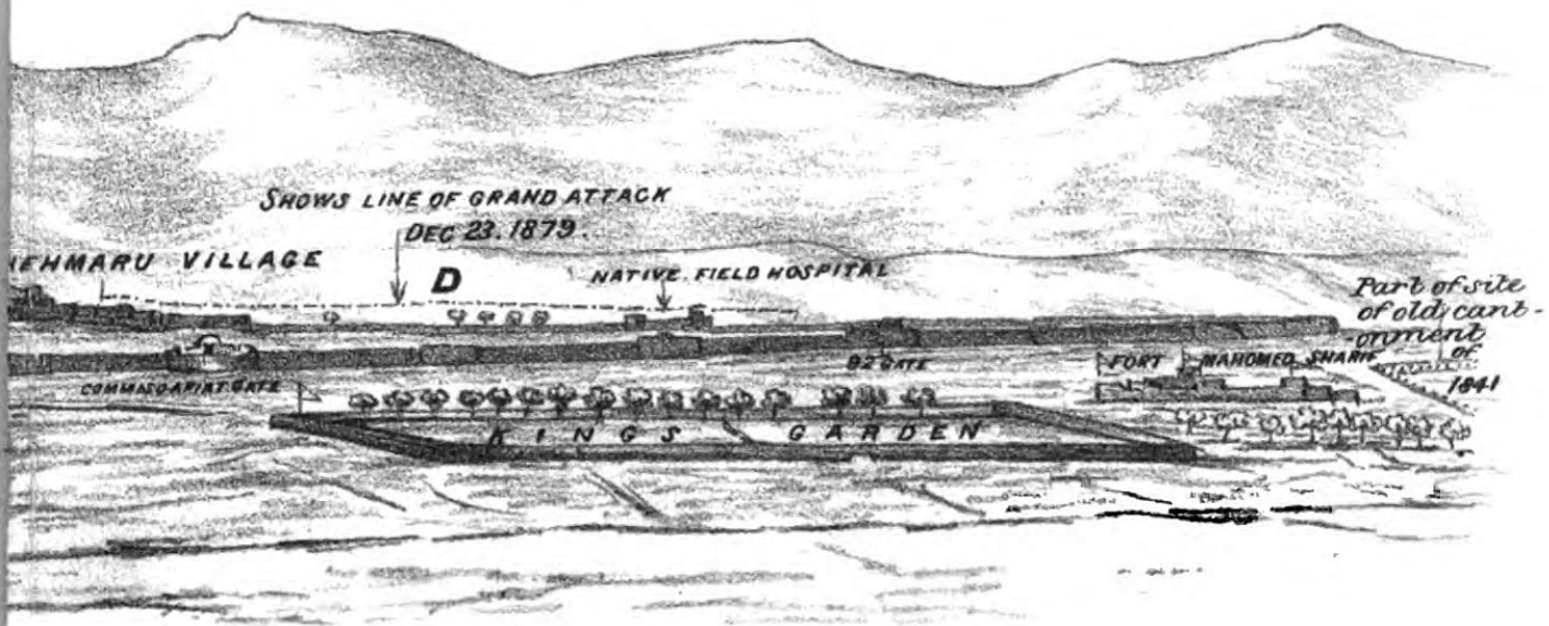
On the day following the explosion Sir Hugh Gough set off to the relief of our beleaguered garrison holding the Shutargardan pass, and who were surrounded by a large force of Ghilzais. His force consisted of the 5th Punjab Infantry, 5th Punjab Cavalry, and four guns of Swinley's Mountain Battery. On the 19th October, Kushi was reached, and on the 20th, when the General advanced towards the Shutargardan and occupied the Shinkai Kotul, the Ghilzais dispersed and fled. On the 29th October the pass was abandoned, the 21st Punjab Native Infantry returning to Ali Khel, while the 3rd Sikhs and Morgan's Mountain Battery proceeded towards Kabul, the head-quarters and two squadrons of the 9th Royal Lancers, who had come up from Kuram, arriving at the same time.

On the 1st November 1879 the camp on the Siah Sung hills was abandoned, and all the British infantry and artillery were concentrated inside the cantonment of Sherpur, the cavalry being quartered outside for a time.

The cantonment consisted of an immense square, three sides of which had been entirely or partly completed, while the fourth, the north or rear side, was nearly filled by the low line of Behmaru hills running east and west. It had been the original intention of the late Amir Shere Ali to build here a vast cantonment, which should include within it the Behmaru line of hills, on the top of which strong forts were to be constructed, whose guns could be turned in any direction. At the base of the hill, near the centre, his own palace was to have been built. Both these works he had commenced ; we found that part of the top of one of these hills, had been levelled for a fortress, while in the middle a large pit had been dug at least one hundred feet deep, presumably for a well.

The foundation wall of his future palace was well advanced, and afterwards helped to form one of the sides of the 5th Goorkha barrack. The length of the cantonment, when completed, would have been nearly four miles. The southern wall, which faced the city and the Siah Sung hills, was at this time completed, except a few hundred feet at the east end. Nearly 800 yards on the west side, facing Bilund Killa, had been built. The east side was most unfinished. Part, about 400 yards, had reached the height of six feet, though the foundation extended for several hundred yards.

The Behmaru hills occupied the fourth or rear side of the square. Their height was about 250 feet



or more in places. In their middle was a gap sixty yards wide. At either end they sloped down toward the east and west walls, leaving large openings at both sides. The opening on the west side was about 200 yards long; that at the eastern end extended for several hundred yards from the Behmaru village, as far as a large enclosure just inside the wall (afterwards used as a field hospital for natives). These three openings, one at each end and the third in the middle of the hills in the rear, together with the low and unfinished state of the east wall, formed great sources of danger to us in the following December, until we had filled them up. The outer wall of Sherpur was of considerable height and thickness, and was strengthened by numerous projecting bastions, and behind the parapet was a walk two and a half feet wide. Between the outer wall and the barracks a dry ditch ten feet wide intervened. The ditches and bastion communicated with the centre square by covered archways, admitting guns of the heaviest calibre. The barracks were built on the inner wall of the square, which formed their back wall; they consisted of long rooms, thirteen feet wide, and were provided with fire-places; verandahs of the same width protected the quarters from the sun's rays; the roofs of the barracks formed very fine and airy promenades.

On our first arrival these quarters were all quite uninhabitable on account of their filthy state, upwards of a foot of dirt and earth had to be removed before

they could be occupied. The Europeans were housed in the permanent barracks, while the different native corps, assisted by hundreds of Hazara coolies, were all hard at work building up their own houses.

The 5th Punjab Cavalry was the first regiment which temporarily occupied Sherpur. They were joined by the 12th Bengal Cavalry.

On the 18th October the 5th Goorkhas and 23rd Pioneers marched into Sherpur, and commenced to hut themselves. The Goorkhas pitched their tents under the Behmaru hills, to the left of the gorge, close to the foundations of Shere Ali's palace, which helped to form their barrack walls. The Pioneers camped at the east end of the Behmaru hills, close beneath a small powder-magazine on the side of the hill, the powder of which was quickly flushed and destroyed. The British troops occupied almost the whole line of barracks on the south side. The field hospital filled up the west end ; then came the 72nd, G-3 Royal Artillery, F-A, Royal Horse Artillery, the commissariat godowns, Officers' quarters, 14th Bengal Lancers, the 9th Lancers, 92nd Highlanders, 67th Foot. The 5th Punjab Cavalry occupied the King's garden outside ; the 12th Bengal Cavalry were only a few days in quarters. General Roberts and his staff occupied the quarters around and over the main entrance on the west side of the square, and the Mountain Battery, Sappers and Miners, and the 5th Punjab Infantry the remainder of the space on the south and north sides of that gateway. The 3rd

Sikhs, 5th Goorkhas, 23rd Pioneers, and Guides occupied the northern and Behmaru hill sides ; the 28th Punjab Native Infantry the east side of the square the Native Field Hospital being near the centre of this side.

Over the gateways on the south side were fine quarters, used by the Amir's officers, which, after clearing and repairing, formed good accommodation for the different Generals and their staffs. The 72nd gateway, No 1, was occupied by the officers of the regiment; No. 2, the commissariat gateway, by General Massy, and afterwards by General Gough and his staff; No. 3, the 92nd gateway, by General Macpherson and his staff.

Inside Sherpur were three small houses with gardens attached. General Baker occupied the one close to the European hospital, the Royal Engineer officers the double-storied, shaky-looking building facing the General's gateway, while the third, in the possession of an amusing old fakeer and a handsome peacock, became, after much alteration, the mess-house of the 9th Lancers. The chief water-supply was obtained by a large diverted channel of the Kabul river, which entered by the southern wall and made its exit by the Behmaru village. One or two wells also existed. Water, however, was procurable close to the surface, and when, in December, the water-channels were cut off, wells were rapidly sunk in different places; so that on this score little trouble was experienced.

The surroundings and approaches to Sherpur were of some interest, as almost the same villages, gardens, and buildings from which the Afghans so harassed our troops in 1841 still existed, though some of them were in a very dilapidated state, and, in December 1879, as in December 1841, were points from which the Afghans again gave us trouble.

The distance between Sherpur and the Peshawur gate of the city was about two miles, the road being nearly straight and flat. On the left of the road from the city, nearly up to the Kabul river, are the plantations of willows before mentioned. On the right, extending out towards Siah Sung, is a large piece of waste and swampy ground where lived some gipsies, and further on some cultivated ground. Nearly half-way the road passed over the river, half a mile from the place where it emerges from the city, the ground being quite open here. The remains and ruins of a once fine bridge were here, but the structure was in such a dilapidated state that only foot-passengers could cross over. The ford, however, was quite shallow, and the force of the stream so slow, that beasts of burden and horsemen could easily ford it. One of our first acts was to patch up this bridge. To the left of the road, commanding the bridge and the road, was the fort known as Mahomed Khan's, or Mahmood Khan's, known in 1841 as the Yoghi Fort.

Between the river and the cantonment the road again crossed an important canal—a diversion of the

river made higher up. This canal ran west to east, and fed the cantonment of Sherpur as well as the country on the east side. Along its north and south banks were the most frequented and nearest roads into the city from Sherpur. A small village* on the right of the road lay close to its south bank; and on the northern side, some hundred yards to the right of the road, were two villages. These latter were strongly occupied by the enemy in December 1879, who also made use of the canals (from which the water had been cut off). In them they not only obtained excellent cover, but bodies of men were able to advance along them securely to different points. Beyond the canal the road bifurcated right and left the right leading to the commissariat and 92nd gateways, and the left to the 72nd and General Roberts's entrance. To the left of the latter, and exactly 700 yards from the 72nd gateway, was the large summer-garden popularly known as the King's garden. This enclosure was converted into quarters and stables for the 5th Punjab Cavalry, who were ordered to vacate it on the 14th December. The enemy subsequently used to annoy us considerably from its walls.

The country on the south of Sherpur was partly under cultivation, but near the west end it was much cut up with ditches, broken-down walls and enclosures, many of considerable height and thickness, and some

* Probably the position of the Commissariat or Bazaar Fort of 1841.

of which ran up within a few yards of the bastions. To the west of the King's garden were the suburbs and gardens of Deh-i-Afghani, all within long rifle-range.

On the western face the country was much more open and cultivated, though intersected with water-courses. One large village, held and fortified by us in December, lay near the north-west corner, and about a mile from the General's gateway was some rising ground, on which were the villages of Bilund Khel.

On the north side, outside Sherpur, close to the foot of the Behmaru hills, were three fortified villages, and two others on the plain near the lake. To the east and north-east, on the road to Kohistan, were several villages, and on the south-east two more; one about six hundred yards off, and another about 1,200 yards off, and nearer the left bank of the river, with a large garden adjoining, which the Afghans held strongly in December 1879. A second experience of the danger of allowing buildings and walls close to a cantonment was not thrown away, and after January 1880 all villages and walls within a radius of 1,000 yards were levelled to the ground, with the exception of those made subservient to our use, or used as flanking positions.

The large lake which occupied part of the ground between the Behmaru hills and the line of hills hemming it in on its north side towards Kohistan, was about two miles long and three quarters of a mile wide at its broadest part. Its greatest depth was from

five to five and a half feet. The water well away from the edge was perfectly clear, and the weeds and grass at the bottom could be seen distinctly. The bottom was quite firm, and covered with about a foot of mud. The water, though clear, was very brackish and undrinkable; fish were never seen in it. During the cold weather its surface was covered with tens of thousands of ducks and wild fowl, from the grey goose to the insignificant coot; and the thundering noise of the birds rising collectively in the air when alarmed by the distant report of a gun, could be heard at a great distance. The presence of these birds, however, attracted many sportsmen, armed probably with only an old Tower Brown Bess. So shy and wary did the ducks become, that it soon became a hopeless task trying to circumvent them.

An objection to the lake is the unpleasant effluvia arising from the decaying matter on the edges, which in the evening found its way into Sherpur. This annoyance increased as the lake rapidly dried up in the summer of 1880, owing to its feeder from the Kabul river having been cut off.

Two roads ran over the dips in the hills bounding its north side, one on the west, leading into the Koh-i-Daman valley, and the other on the right, and more used, running to Kohistan over the Paimana Kotul.

On the 12th November the first snow fell and the cold rapidly increased. The high persistent cold wind which blew during the latter part of the month

did much harm, especially among the camp-followers, who were very poorly clad. But though the wind was cold, the heat of the sun was considerable. Next to the wind, the want of rum was much felt, for the small stock brought over to the Shutargardan rapidly diminished. At the end of the month the officers' allowances were reduced to half a tot a day, which was generally treasured up to be sipped with a little hot water and the after-dinner pipe. The local-made Kabul wine now came into requisition, until the Governor almost entirely stopped its issue from the city, for all of the liquor-shops were carefully guarded, and without an order signed by the Governor it could not be procured.

On the 14th November, General Macpherson's brigade having opened up communication with the Khaibar, the first convoy of sick left for India.

This brigade remained in the district of Lattabund and Tezin until the 20th, when it returned to Sherpur.

On the 19th instant the line of telegraph was completed between London and Kabul, soon to be used to convey the stirring news and events which will be described in the ensuing chapters.



CHAPTER IX.

Mushk-i-Alam.—The Signs and Warnings preceding the Combination against us in December 1879.—General Baker goes to Maidan.—Bahadur Khan refuses to come in.—He flies.—General Baker is nearly surprised.—His Brigade returns to Kabul.—Our Governor at Maidan is murdered.—Affairs at Sherpur.—The Paper Chase.—The Review.—General Macpherson's Force goes out December 8th.—General Baker's Force marches to Charasiab, December 9th.—December 10th, Macpherson attacks and defeats the Kohistanis.—General Baker reaches the Kabul River.—December 11th, General Massy, unsupported, attacks the enemy with Horse Artillery and Cavalry.—The Guns are lost.—The Enemy threaten Kabul.—General Roberts saves Kabul with the 72nd.—General Baker's movements.

THE cold winds and blasts of November brought with them rumours and reports, which became general in camp, that the Afghan nation had determined to combine and oust the hated kaffir from their dominions. The hope which pervaded most minds was that such would be the case, and that opportunity might be afforded of catching the subtle Afghan in the open. The precedent of our army holding a position somewhat analogous to that of 1841, and

having then been totally destroyed, is a fact deeply impressed upon the minds of all Afghans.

The story of the destruction of our army then, has probably been carefully told, and dinned by the fathers into the ears of their sons. Anyhow, the rumours gained ground, and some officers were seriously warned by friendly Afghans, with many shakes of the head, that a deadly combination, such as had never existed before, was about to attack us, and sweep us out of the country we had won, and whose king we had spirited away. A religious war was being preached against us by fanatical mullahs, from Ghazni to Charekar, the chief priest and instigator being an aged Syud, called Mushk-i-Alam, which being interpreted means "Scent of the world." The priest, reported to be upwards of ninety years of age, was so infirm that he had to be carried about on a bed, from which rude platform he distributed blessings, charms and exhortations to the people, calling upon all true followers of the Prophet to gird on their arms and join his standard against the infidel and pig-eating kaffir. The power exerted by this priest over his ignorant followers was very great, and his words and injunctions spread far and wide, and soon began to show fruit. His chief organiser was a sirdar, Mahomed Jan, who in the reign of Shere Ali had commanded the artillery arrayed against us at Ali Musjid in 1878, and who is also said to have taken an active part against us at Charasiab. After this he fled to Ghazni, where he was able safely to arrange

his plans with Mushk-i-Alam, and organise the gathering of the hordes which were to surround us in December.

The earliest practical news of our approaching troubles is to be ^{found} in the Blue Book.

"*Diary, Nov. 10th, 1879.*—Colonel Macgregor, the Chief of the Staff, received information about the disturbance at Ghazni, and the affairs in the surrounding country, which spoke of the assembly of large bodies of tribesmen about that town under the orders of Mushk-i-Alam. The informer calculated that four and a half or five complete regiments of infantry could be brought together in Wardak, all well armed, but without guns."

"*Kabul, Nov. 17th, 1879.**—General Baker with a small force will proceed towards Maidan in the direction of Ghazni, to collect supplies and settle the country, reports having reached me that a certain moollah is trying to create a disturbance, and has collected a certain number of followers between this and Ghazni."

"*Nov. 17th, Diary continues:*—It is reported that five Kabul regiments from Turkestan have arrived near Charekar (twenty-five miles from Kabul) on their way to their homes, and said to number about three thousand men . . . General Daood Shah and others think it probable that all the Kabuli troops in Turkestan will come down before the winter sets in.

* A telegram of the same date to the Foreign Secretary.

They are receiving no pay, and seem to have no reason for remaining away from their homes."

This information showed that in the neighbourhood of Kabul thousands of regular troops, with arms and ammunition, but without pay and employment, and, therefore, necessarily ripe for mischief, were gradually massing together.

On November 21st, General Baker marched for Maidan, to aid Sirdar Mahomed Hussain Khan in the collection of forage, and to disperse any armed bodies of men found in the neighbourhood. Mahomed Hussain was the Governor we had appointed at Maidan.

The plot begins now to unravel itself, and our force to take the initiative. Our enemies, too, were on the move, for on the 22nd, the next day, Mushk-i-Alam was reported to have reached Wardak from Ghazni, with a number of followers. Bahadur Khan, head-man of the Umar Khel section of Ghilzais in the Nirkh valley, had refused to come in, while the neighbouring villages, in consequence, refused to give their quota of bhoosa. This state of things was said to be due to the influence of the aged Mushk-i-Alam.

General Roberts, who had ridden out to see General Baker's force, now deputed Captain Turner, an assistant political officer, with two squadrons of cavalry, to bring in the refractory chief, Bahadur Khan. The cavalry, on approaching the village, were received with a heavy fire, and, the enemy appearing in force on all

sides, they were compelled to retire to camp in the evening, with the loss of three horses and without Bahadur Khan.

On the next day, the baggage and tents of the brigade were housed in a fort, and the troops marched to Bahadur Khan's fort, who with his followers fled to the hills. His fort was, therefore, destroyed.

November 25th.—The feeling of the people was again shown, by their treacherously attacking some mounted Kabul police—sent out to a village near Dakir, with the hope of procuring some of General Nek Mahomed's property—killing five and wounding three.

November 26th.—Rumours reached Kabul of a contemplated rising of the Kohistanis and Safis of Tagao. Each day brought in some fresh news of disaffection.

November 27th.—Further reports were received of an intended disturbance in Kohistan and the neighbourhood. It was said that emissaries of Mushk-i-Alam had been at work in this part of the country, and that a holy war was being assiduously preached. On the same day a treacherous attempt was made to surprise General Baker, who was out with a reconnoitring party consisting of the 9th Royal Lancers, and had reached the village of Ben-i-Badan. Here great proffers of friendship were made by the headmen of the village. Tea and milk were brought out to the General and his staff, who proceeded to avail themselves of it, after giving an order to feed the

horses. This order was about to be carried out, and some bits had been opened, when a number of footmen were discovered, endeavouring to surround the party. Our cavalry then retired in good order, after exchanging several shots with our former friends, the leader of whom was the next day reported to have been killed by a chance shot from a carbine. This village was destroyed the following day.

November 29th.—A letter was received from our newly-appointed Governor of Kohistan, Shah Baz Khan, which stated that the people were upon the point of rising. His order calling upon the headmen to come in had been ignored, while they openly declared their intention of raising a holy war and destroying the British force in Kabul.

The city bankers and others in Kabul confidently asserted that the Kohistanis had collected in force, and that a night attack upon the cantonment was imminent.

On December 1st, General Baker's brigade returned to Kabul. The forage demanded had been supplied and the neighbourhood reported quiet. The presence of this brigade at Maidan no doubt delayed the combination afterwards formed against us by preventing the insurgents under Muskh-i-Alam joining with the Kohistanis and Safis. After the brigade had left Maidan the inhabitants openly showed their hand by murdering our Governor, Sirdar Mahomed Hussain Khan. Another of our Governors in the Logar valley, Sirdar Abdullah Khan, was attacked

by the Logars and besieged in a small fort to which he had fled for refuge.

News was daily received showing that disaffection had spread on all sides, and General Daud Shah, who probably knew of everything that took place, anticipated a general outbreak of disorder in Kohistan, Wardak, Logar, and Maidan.

December 7th.—General Roberts telegraphed to the Foreign Secretary:—"Affairs round Kabul less satisfactory of late. In Maidan, Sirdar Mahomed Hussain Khan has been murdered, apparently by men of Mushk-i-Alam's rising. Sirdar Abdullah Khan has been attacked by armed bands in Logar, and for a time besieged in a fort. Some Kohistani Maliks have come in, but the leading man sends excuses, and the country is reported very unquiet."

The telegram concludes:—

"Anxious as I am to avoid any further expeditions at present, I may be forced, if this movement spreads, to send out troops again."

To the uninitiated ones like myself, matters inside Sherpur were going on much the same as usual. Rumours were treated with indifference, which was strengthened by the general tendency shown by the Afghans to live and fight another day. Barracks, huts, and stables were being rapidly run up in cantonments. The weather was cold and bracing, rendering exercise most enjoyable, while the snow which had settled on the higher ranges in view helped to soften the ordinary barren look of the hills.

On the 6th of December a large picnic was given by the General near Babar Badshah's tomb, on the left of the Deh Mazung gorge, to which all officers were invited, with their knives and forks. After the picnic there was a paper-chase, which finished up near the ground over which our cavalry were to charge so desperately a few days afterwards. This chase was celebrated for the number of falls which happened, owing to the difficult nature of the ditches, the banks of which were lined with willows and poplars whose branches whisked off several riders. Upwards of half the field were unhorsed, many more than once. Even our gallant General, who was well mounted, showed the marks of mother earth on his coat. General Daud Shah, then a guest, followed the chase in his way, and appeared thoroughly to enjoy it. The hares on this memorable occasion were a Captain of the 9th Lancers and a heavy weight belonging to the Rifle Brigade.

Our last peaceful act took place on the 8th December, when a parade of all the troops in Sherpur was held on the Behmaru plain, to present distinguished conduct medals to men of the 72nd Highlanders as well as to show the people who attended our teeth and our mettle. This parade went off like most displays of the kind. The turf was perfect, and there was no dust to mar the display and the marching past.

That afternoon our movements against the Afghans commenced, and a brigade under General Macpher-

son marched out through the Deh Mazung gorge, to a village called Killa Asher, near the Nanuchi Kotul. The Queen's Own Corps of Guides were ordered to Kabul.

On the next day, December 9th, Macpherson sent out a small party of cavalry, consisting of the 9th Lancers and 14th Bengal Lancers, to reconnoitre the ground to the north-west of his camp, and make a sketch report of the road. The party proceeded into the Koh-i-Daman valley as far as the village of Shakar Durrah. They saw nothing of the enemy, but received news from the villagers that the Kohistanis, varying from 5,000 to 6,000 men, were collected about eight miles this side of Istalif. They returned to camp at 6 P.M.

On the same day, the 9th, another brigade, under General Baker, marched out from Sherpur in a southerly direction through Bin-i-Hissar, and camped at Charasiab with the ultimate object of getting in the rear of the Maidan and Arghandi Kotul, by the valley of the Kabul river, and of catching the enemy who, defeated by General Macpherson, should be driven into his arms; both brigades to join hands on the 11th December.

On the 10th December, leaving the four guns of F-A Royal Horse Artillery, one squadron of the 9th Lancers, and one squadron of the 14th Bengal Lancers, under General Massy, at Killa Asher, with orders to join his brigade next day near the Arghandi Kotul—the road he was about to take having been

reported impracticable for horse-artillery—General Macpherson marched his brigade in a north-westerly direction, up the slopes of a ridge bounding the extreme north of the Chardeh valley, and separating it from Koh-i-Daman. The enemy, who had fired on our cavalry, were found taking up a strong position on the hills above the village of Karez Mir. At the same time another body of Afghans was seen occupying some villages six miles in the rear in the Chardeh valley, probably the same who the next day attacked the guns. Not anticipating an attack from this direction, General Macpherson determined to attack the large force on his right front; and, sending all his infantry against them, the Kohistanis were met at close quarters, and driven in good style from all their positions, many standards falling into our hands, as well as dead bodies and a few wounded. It was impossible to estimate the enemy's loss, but it was observed that whenever an Afghan fell a comrade carried him to the rear. Our own casualties were most trifling, no one being killed, while Major Fitzhugh of the 5th Goorkhas and eight men in all were wounded.

Mir Butcha is said to have commanded in person, and his object of uniting his forces with those of Mahomed Jan had been frustrated for a time.

Macpherson's brigade camped that night on the position they had won.

While this fight was going on, General Baker's force made for his appointed position, near the Ghazni road. The morning was bitterly cold, when

about 8 o'clock our camp was struck at Charasiab. Rumours had reached us of large bodies of men marching up against us from the Logar valley. These rumours contained some truth, and, by our leaving Charasiab, the enemy from this direction were able to march unopposed into the Chardeh valley, and swell the numbers from Maidan which came into collision with the guns next day. Leaving the Logar valley on our left, our force marched uninterruptedly eight miles across open country, in a south-westerly direction, towards the hills overlooking the Ghazni road beyond, which sent off spurs on our right towards Charasiab. On these we first sighted some armed men, out of rifle-range, and who speedily made off, having probably first noted our strength; but when, as at this time, every man's hand was against us, our numbers had been probably carefully counted in a village we had passed about two miles from camp, and the information passed on to our enemies.

The cold at starting was very severe, and now, as we entered the lower barren hills, the wind dropped, whilst the sun-rays poured down with a fierceness out of all comparison with the previous cold, and men began to fall out. No vegetation grew on these barren hills, which reflected the heat powerfully, and as no water was procurable, the supply brought on mules began to run short. The high main ridge over which the track ran was at least fifteen miles from our camp, and was only reached by the advance-guard near sunset.

On reaching the summit a spring of water was found trickling down the steep nullah which led to our camp, about three miles distant. This nullah was nearly two miles long, the sides were comparatively open at the summit, but lower down the passage became quite narrow, with high precipitous sides. The road or track was exceedingly bad, and the passage of the brigade was necessarily delayed on this account, as well as by the narrowness of the road, which in many places only allowed of the baggage animals proceeding in single file. The short winter day was fast drawing to a close before half the troops and baggage had defiled through. After the sun had set, the air became intensely cold, and the small stream in the nullah froze hard, while solid bits of ice and icicles barred the way and made walking extremely difficult for man, much more for the beasts. Nature had thus thrown an unexpected obstruction in the way. As the Mountain Battery to which I was attached emerged from the nullah, just enough light remained to see our camp was to be pitched on a stony plateau, sloping gradually down to the Kabul river, running about half a mile below. The camp was laid out in pitch darkness, and the coldness of the wind was very intense. We all heartily pitied the position of the rear-guard near the top of the pass, for it would be utterly impossible now to bring in all the baggage. The rear-guard was composed of a company of the 92nd and 5th Punjab Infantry; and the Europeans wisely opened some meat-tins with

their bayonets, to satisfy their hunger. Though their position was somewhat difficult in case of a night attack, the pickets, carefully placed, were not disturbed during the night, and they all reached camp about 9 A.M. on the following day, having lost remarkably little baggage.

On December 11th our brigade marched to the Arghandi Kotul, over which ran the road from Kabul to Ghazni. Here we were to dispose of the enemy to be driven into our arms by General Macpherson's brigade. That morning General Macpherson's camp was on the ground above the village of Karez Mir; General Massy's cavalry and horse artillery were close to Killa Asher, near the Ghazni road, along which he had received orders to advance towards the Arghandi Kotul, in order to meet Macpherson there. The west side of the kotul was to be held by Baker, Massy and Macpherson being respectively east and east-north-east of it.

The last paragraph of a telegram in the Blue Book, from General Roberts, perhaps best explains the object of the brigade movements:—"General Macpherson's brigade, with cavalry and horse artillery under General Massy, will advance to-day (December 11th) towards Arghandi Kotul and Maidan, and should effect a junction with General Baker." We had, however, reckoned without our host, and without true information of the strength of the Afghans and the positions they had occupied.

It should be recollected that, when General Mac-

pherson, the day before, was about to attack the Kohistanis whom we afterwards routed, some villages six miles in his rear, in the Chardeh valley and near Killa Asher, were seen to be taken possession of by the enemy. During the night of the 10th December their numbers were probably swelled by men from Charasiab and the Logar valley, even if they did not form the main body of Mahomed Jan's army. On the 11th December all the different brigades outside Sherpur were engaged with the enemy, General Massy getting into action first, then General Macpherson, while about the same time General Baker's rear-guard was actively occupied. Details of each affair will be given ; but, as the writer was not present with the first two forces, the description is necessarily incomplete. Sherpur itself was held by nearly 3,000 men all told.

General Massy, having discovered the enemy in front of him, near the village of Killa Kazi, crossed the Ghazni Road* apparently without knowing it, and brought his guns into action. The enemy, whose large numbers were not known, occupied a considerable extent of country, as well as some hills and high ground lying north-west of Killa Kazi. The distance at first was considerable, but our guns, advancing gradually, got into accurate range. The Afghans, however, seeing no infantry with this force, and well knowing that Macpherson's brigade was six or seven miles away—one of the

* Roads in Afghanistan are often very indistinct tracks.

hills occupied by them commanding a perfect and distinct view on all sides—and aware that the cavalry force, which must have appeared to them small, could only act indifferently on account of the dykes and ditches intervening — advanced boldly and determinately on the battery, and, opening out their line, quite outflanked our little force. The fire of the battery in no way checked them, and the guns were forced to retire. In the subsequent confusion which followed, the Ghazni road was again crossed, and the guns eventually became hopelessly jammed in the formidable dykes in their way. With the brave hope of saving them, the cavalry made a most gallant charge, but the nature of the ground was all in the enemy's favour, and no real impression could be made against overwhelming numbers. Colonel Cleland, commanding the 9th Lancers, was dangerously wounded, Captain Mackenzie was severely injured by his charger, which had been shot, falling on him. He was rescued from his perilous position amongst the Afghan knives by the cool behaviour of Lieutenants McInnis and Trower, who dismounted, and dragged him from under his horse.* Lieutenants Ricardo and Hearsey of the same regiment were both killed in the midst of the enemy; Lieutenant

* Two troopers of the 9th Lancers lying wounded under their horses in a watercourse, were most gallantly rescued from certain death by the Rev. J. W. Adams, Chaplain to the Forces, who, in dismounting to assist them, lost his own horse. For this act he was decorated with the Victoria Cross.

Forbes, of the 14th Bengal Lancers, was severely wounded, while many troopers had been killed and wounded. The cavalry were driven back, and the four guns, which had been spiked, together with our killed and many wounded, fell into the hands of the Afghans.

The 9th Lancers lost that day seventeen killed and eight wounded; the 14th Bengal Lancers, eight killed and four wounded; the Horse Artillery loss was not very severe. Lieutenant Hardy, R.H.A., was killed while nobly endeavouring to save the life of Lieutenant Forbes of the 14th Lancers. This latter officer, severely wounded, had been placed on a gun-limber which had to be abandoned. Lieutenant Hardy, however, refused to leave Forbes, and was killed, it is believed, by a ball through the head. Poor Forbes, of course, fell a victim to the fury of the Afghans.

The onerous duty of covering our retreat fell to Captain Neville, with his squadron of the 14th Bengal Lancers, and a troop of the 9th under Captain Gough. The Afghans, after plundering the guns, but not otherwise injuring them, advanced on Kabul by the Deh Mazung gorge. That morning General Roberts, accompanied by his staff, rode out over the Nanuchi Kotul towards the scene of action, leaving General Hugh Gough to command at Sherpur. As soon as he became aware of the danger in which the Cavalry and Horse Artillery guns were, his action was quick and decided. One of his aides-de-camp, Lieutenant Sherston, was despatched to

General Macpherson requesting him to push on at once and engage the enemy. Another officer, General Hills, V.C. (Military Governor of Kabul), was sent back to Sherpur, ordering a wing of the 72nd Highlanders to proceed as quickly as possible to Deh Mazung and occupy the gorge, and as it was evident that General Massy must retire, Captain Pole-Carew was sent to General Massy, directing him to retire his guns, and to charge the enemy with his cavalry to enable the guns to escape. After the gallant charge (led by Colonel Cleland) took place, the usual disorder prevailed, and it took some little time to rally the troopers and collect the wounded. Meanwhile the enemy had advanced within a few yards of General Roberts's position. Charging again was out of question, our force being a mere handful, while the numbers of the enemy were increasing every minute, each village passed in the retreat turning out every fighting man it possessed. All now to be hoped for was a steady retirement. This retirement, under the existing conditions, was carried out admirably, and the enemy were kept at a certain distance until the Deh Mazung gorge was neared. The anxious question was, would the 72nd Highlanders reach their position in time? This the gallant Brownlow did to a minute, thus securing the safety of Sherpur. From the roofs and cover of the village, steady and fatal volleys were poured into the advancing and infuriated mob of Afghans, which turned them from their course, and they retired in large bodies to the hills

south of the Bala Hissar, which they hoped to possess themselves of in due time, their movements being determined by Macpherson's brigade, which was pressing hard to catch them in the rear.

While General Roberts, with his handful of cavalry, was directing the retirement on Deh Mazung—a task which might have taxed the abilities of a less cool or brave soldier—when nearing the gorge, feeling sure that Macpherson's advance would enable him to recover the lost guns, a messenger was sent by him to Sherpur, ordering fresh teams of horses to be sent out. These arrived in time to bring the guns in, after they had been recovered by Colonel Macgregor. Let us now return to General Macpherson.

At 8 o'clock that morning his camp was struck, and his brigade commenced its march over the Surkh Kotul in the direction of Arghandi, where, after joining hands with General Massy, it was to co-operate with General Baker, then also marching to Arghandi from its west side against Mahomed Jan. On reaching the kotul, the hills on each side of which commanded an extensive view, large numbers of the enemy were seen moving across the Chardeh valley in the Direction of Kabul. After a short halt had been made to watch the Afghan tactics, the brigade began to descend from the Kotul into the Pughman valley.

The General himself pushed on ahead towards Arghandi, hoping before 11 o'clock to see General Baker. About 10.30 A.M. the sound of artillery-fire

succeeded by the rattle of musketry was heard, south-east, in the direction of Killa Asher, General Massy's camping-ground. This was at first thought to be General Baker's brigade (which had then hardly reached Maidan) becoming engaged with Mahomed Jan's army. By 11 A.M. it became evident that a very sharp engagement was going on to Macpherson's left front. For an hour artillery-fire, the crash of bursting shells, and the rattle of musketry continued. It then became clear that General Baker's brigade was not the force engaged, and fears were entertained that the horse-artillery and lancers, in their endeavour to join Macpherson's brigade, had been drawn into an action with the enemy. That such had been the case we have already seen. General Macpherson now moved round his right shoulder, and the infantry were hurried on with all speed. On clearing the intervening villages and orchards, and getting into the open ground near the bed of the Kabul river, the Afghans, numbering many thousands, were to be seen moving towards Kabul, and several shots were fired from the villages just passed. By noon all firing in front had ceased, and General Macpherson soon received news that the engagement which had been witnessed from a distance was a terrific combat between the horse-artillery and lancers on one side, and Mahomed Jan's army on the other. Though informed that the horse-artillery and cavalry had retired, General Macpherson was not aware that the guns had been abandoned.

Consequently, when he arrived on the ground where the action had taken place, and saw vast numbers of Afghans in front of him, he determined to push on at once in the direction that General Baker was expected (and who was then near his appointed position), and if possible, drive the enemy into his arms. Mahomed Jan, on the arrival of General Macpherson's brigade on his flank and rear, divided his force, sending part towards the Kabul gorge, and keeping the rest to oppose General Macpherson's advance.

Despatching his baggage towards Kabul under a strong guard, composed of part of the 67th Foot, 5th Goorkhas, and 3rd Sikhs, General Macpherson then advanced his force in the following order : 5th Goorkhas on right, 67th centre, 3rd Sikhs left, 14th Bengal Lancers on left of Sikhs. Though vastly superior in numbers, the enemy made no show of resistance, but slowly retired. By 4 P.M. Mahomed Jan's army was scattered. They were pursued to the village of Killa Kazi, from whence they began to swarm up the hills in the direction by which General Baker was expected, and the mountain guns were brought into play against them, until orders came from General Roberts for this brigade to return towards Kabul with all speed, as the enemy, on being driven back by the 72nd on their attempt to enter the city, had swerved to the right and were threatening the Bala Hissar heights.

During the disorder—after the charge of the Cavalry—described in a previous page, Colonel, now

Sir Charles Macgregor, the chief of the Staff, with some other officers, became separated from General Roberts, and made for the Nanuchi Kotul. While so doing, Colonel Macgregor observed that the Afghans, in their onward rush, had left no large force to guard the guns they had seized, and he determined to recover them. An officer was immediately despatched to the Nanuchi Kotul, with orders to stop all stragglers and spare horses. A second messenger was despatched to Major Griffiths, commanding Macpherson's baggage guard* proceeding to Kabul, ordering him to detach part of his guard. With the aid of stragglers and this force, he extricated the guns from the ditches into which they had fallen, and, horsed by the teams sent out by the foresight of General Roberts, they were safely brought in, and soon were in working order again.

Let me now ask the reader to turn to General Baker's camp, pitched near the right bank of the Kabul river. After the arrival of the rear-guard, which had remained in the pass during the night, our camp was struck. Rumours of hostility to be expected in the neighbourhood had reached the General, but the only evidence to be seen was a white

* Major Griffiths' guard on leaving the hill was close pressed by the enemy. Major Cook, V.C., 5th Goorkhas, was struck in the head and stunned by a stone thrown at him by an Afghan, his own pistol having missed fire; and later on his brother, Lieutenant Cook, of the 3rd Sikhs, was dangerously wounded over the heart.

standard on the hill on the right bank of the river more than a mile distant. The 5th Punjab Cavalry reconnoitred on ahead, and two companies of the 92nd, under Major White, proceeded as an advance-guard, then followed the 92nd, Mountain Battery, and 5th Punjab Infantry. The rear-guard was formed of one company of the 92nd, under Lieutenant Fraser, and one company of the 5th Punjab Infantry under Lieutenant Sparling, while the transport was commanded by Captain Wynter of the 33rd Foot, and Lieutenants Cotton and Wilson.

After fording the river the road ran due west, and then curved round to the north and north-east to the Maidan Kotul, itself about four miles distant from the Arghandi Kotul, on the far side of which our camp was to be pitched. The Kabul river ran on our left part of the way, and high gravelly hills commanded the road on the right. These eventually joined the Maidan Kotul. Once in the possession of this kotul the main line of retreat of the enemy to be dispersed by Generals Macpherson and Massy in this direction would be cut off. As our force began to move off, one or two solitary men were visible on the high hills in rear of the camp, whence all our movements could be clearly seen. After the main body had crossed the river, and the baggage was starting, small bodies began to show themselves, and it was evident that the rear-guard would have some work to do. The Afghans, however, always showed much caution and deliberation in their actions. Our cavalry proceeded

to the Maidan Kotul, some four miles, without discovering an enemy, and the advance-guard behind them also passed by.

The sight of the main body, a more compact object, however, tempted the Afghans who were concealed in the hills on our right, and several shots were directed at it, many striking the ground unpleasantly near, but causing no injury. No notice was taken of the firing, and the main body proceeded and halted under the Maidan Kotul. The men with the standard, on the opposite bank, received encouragement from our taking no notice of their comrades, and some of their bolder spirits left their sungur, and, crossing the Kabul river, reached cover on our left flank, and shot one sepoy dead. After a considerable halt on the Maidan Kotul, the main body moved on, and the cavalry, under Major Williams, crossed the Arghandi Kotul, and captured several horses in some hastily-deserted stables. Between the Maidan and Arghandi Kotuls, the road ran through comparatively level and open country for about four miles, though it was somewhat cut up by ravines. The hills on each side were out of rifle-range. After proceeding two miles, news was sent forward that the rear-guard was being vigorously attacked, and in some danger of being surrounded.

After crossing the Kabul river the rear-guard, then commanded by Major McCallam of the 92nd Highlanders, was threatened on all sides, and on arriving near the base of the Maidan Kotul, where the road

ran between two hills, they were in great jeopardy, for the Afghans were much emboldened by the sight of their small numbers, and from the knowledge that they were unable to stand and fight fair, as the main body had moved on. The enemy attempted to seize the spur on the right of their road running down from the Kotul, which had to be secured with the bayonet. Their left flank towards the Kabul river was also attacked ; while in the rear the enemy pressed up within 200 yards, and at one time had nearly charged home, but the determined front shown by the 92nd and 5th Punjab Infantry kept them just at bay, and enabled the force and baggage to reach the Maidan Kotul. Captain Wynter, 33rd Foot, the senior officer in charge of the transport, behaved with great coolness and bravery on this occasion. Two guns of the mountain battery under Lieutenant Montanaro, and a company of the 5th Punjab Infantry under Lieutenant Jamieson, were then sent back and a few extra doolies. As the relief sent to the aid of the rear-guard neared the Maidan Kotul, on the other side of which the fighting was going on, several doolies were passed carrying wounded men, one of them, a sepoy of the 5th Punjab Infantry, screaming in mortal agony.

The arrival of the two guns was most opportune, and checked the enemy who were rushing down from the higher hills, and who, not having observed the relief, were suddenly surprised at finding a shell bursting amidst them. Mackenzie, an old soldier of

the 92nd, was here brought up, shot severely through the thigh, so that a tourniquet had to be applied to check the bleeding ; as he was shifted from one dooly to another the click of the broken bone was distinctly felt, and he said to me in broad Scotch, "I fear the bone is broken, I felt it click." Next day, when told he must lose his leg, two tears silently trickled down his cheek, but he puffed his pipe manfully, and pulled himself together. His leg was afterwards removed in the field hospital at Sherpur, and he made a good recovery. Hardly had his dooly been moved in when the last of our men holding the Kotul above were ordered to retire. It was immediately seized by the Afghans, who swarmed up from the other side, and planted their standards, and began to fire down on us as fast as they could. As the ground afforded no cover, the order was given to double for four hundred yards, the rear line of skirmishers facing about at intervals to check the enemy.

The half troop of the 5th Punjab Cavalry with the rear-guard, being under the command of a handsome grey-bearded Sikh, retired with great coolness, and their presence no doubt helped to prevent the enemy rushing down in the open. Being a compact body they attracted fire, and at 800 yards from the Kotul one of the duffadars was shot dead through the neck. Another casualty occurred to the infantry ; but beyond this, in spite of the number of bullets fired after us, no one else was hit, and we were soon out of

range. Strange to say, the enemy were afraid to follow us up, which was most fortunate, as darkness soon set in, and our camp was not reached until 7.30 P.M.

The advance-guard had reached the Kotul by 3 o'clock. Finding the hills on each side of our camp—and which would command our line of march on the morrow—occupied by the enemy (some composed of the Afghans whom Macpherson had driven off), Major Swinley was directed to open fire on them with two guns ; and the 92nd advancing in their usual straight manner on each side, led by Major White and supported by Lieutenant Napier and Captain Gordon, the heights were rapidly cleared, and occupied during the night.

General Baker had now gained the position at Arghandi, on the Ghazni road, which he had been directed to hold, and the orders delivered to him had been carried out. The arrival of his force was later than had been anticipated by General Macpherson, and instead of meeting a routed enemy his rear-guard had been attacked all day.

General Macpherson had also carried out his instructions, and had defeated the Kohistanis and prevented their junction with the enemy coming from Maidan and Wardak, and was that morning marching towards his rendezvous.

The somewhat precipitate, and entirely unsupported, commencement of the day's fighting by General Massy, seems to have been the hitch in the arrange-

ment. The loss of these guns led at the time to some bitter and partial criticism, and one feels great delicacy in now referring to it ; yet to many it will seem evident that could Massy and Macpherson's brigades have attacked the enemy in concert, the termination of the day would have been different. This co-operation was not only intended, but ordered. Every possible care was taken to prevent the small body of cavalry and horse-artillery guns coming into collision with the enemy until they had rejoined the infantry of Macpherson's brigade ; the officer in command was ordered to wait upon General Macpherson, and to keep well to the rear until General Macpherson's force had got clear of the hills and debouched on the plain near Killa Kazi.

The extreme wisdom and forethought of this order shows what the commander had anticipated. The public can only judge by results, which in this case appear to be what was, instead of what might have been. The easy manner in which Colonel Brownlow's 300 infantry drove back the Afghans from the Deh-Mazung gorge is a fact plain and simple, and shows what a crushing defeat might have been inflicted on the enemy, even to their combination being completely broken up.

By the rapid capture of the guns, an enemy deadly in numbers, but weak in combination and tactics, became a strong and combined foe ; and as the news, probably in a much exaggerated form, spread far and wide, thousands hesitating to

join the ranks against us now no longer held back.

The disposition of our troops on the evening of the 11th December was as follows:—

General Macpherson's force occupied the Deh-Mazung gorge, and the Koh-i-Asmai heights which commanded it ; a strong picket of the 72nd held the Bala Hissar, and Sher Darwaza hills. Sherpur was defended by G-3 R.A., F-A. Royal Horse Artillery, 9th Lancers, 14th Bengal Lancers, and detachments of all British and native regiments amounting to nearly two thousand men, and afterwards by the Corps of Guides, 800 strong. General Baker's brigade was camped on the Kabul side of the Arghandi Kotul, about twelve miles from Kabul. During the night Baker's camp and Sherpur were not disturbed, but a most determined attack was made on the Bala Hissar picket. This picket had been posted to protect a signalling station ; it was composed of two companies of the 72nd, under Lieutenants Ferguson, Milne, and Robertson, and was afterwards strengthened by thirty men of the 67th, under Sub-Lieutenant Shaw and Captain Jarvis, who assumed command. At 7 P.M. the enemy attacked in force, and the outlying sentries were withdrawn. This attack was repulsed, and also another at 9 P.M. Towards midnight the Afghans determined to make a grand *coup*. They collected in large numbers all around the picket, and opened a heavy fire from all sides, which lasted for a quarter of an hour. Under cover of this fusilade, a large body

of men assembled at the east end of the sungur, intending to rush it. They advanced to within fifty yards of the breastworks, when the steady volleys of the picket were too much for them, and they halted, keeping up a continuous fire, shouting, and calling out terms of abuse. After a few more volleys from the picket, they began to waver, and, finally, were sent pell-mell down the hill-side. Eleven of the picket were wounded. Captain Jarvis had a narrow escape, a bullet passing through his coat-sleeve and one side of his patrol jacket. The enemy still had possession of the Takt-i-Shah, and the lower slopes and approaches. This was the only occasion on which General Roberts' army at Kabul was attacked at night in force.

On the following day, reinforcements of the enemy were seen advancing from the direction of Indiki, and swarming up the western slopes towards the Takt-i-Shah. Their position was attacked at noon by General Macpherson, and the force, consisting of the 5th Goorkhas, 3rd Sikhs, and the picket under Captain Jarvis, under the command of Colonel Noel Money, advanced on the Afghans. So strongly were they posted in their steep and commanding position, that after several hours' hard fighting our troops only succeeded in getting half-way up. In the attack Lieutenant Fasken, of the 3rd Sikhs, and Lieutenant Ferguson, of the 72nd, were severely wounded ; and here, too, a gallant soldier, Major John Cook, V.C., of the 5th Goorkhas, received his mortal wound, and

ten men were killed and wounded. No attack was made upon Sherpur, which was being barricaded as rapidly as possible.

General Baker's brigade was on the march soon after daybreak on the 12th. Before starting, the Afghans, whom we had left the night before on the Maidan Kotul, showed themselves, with their standards, lining the Arghandi Kotul in the rear of our camp, as well as high ground on each side. Three shells were sent amongst them from the mountain-guns. Up to this time none of us in camp were aware of the fight that had taken place on the previous day, or of the loss of the guns.

A soldier's instinct probably told the General that something must be wrong in front, as, instead of our having got in rear of the enemy, numbers of them were persistently following us. He, therefore, moved off rapidly with the cavalry and the main body, leaving the disposal of the enemy in our rear to part of the 5th Punjab Infantry, two mountain guns, and a squadron of the 5th Punjab Cavalry, the whole under Major Pratt, who commanded the 5th Punjab Infantry. The Afghans, as usual, emboldened by being let alone, and knowing that we were about to retire, opened out their line, especially on our left flank. Unlike the previous day, however, we had now plenty of daylight before us, with comparatively open country, and then ground for some distance over which cavalry could charge. After giving the last of the baggage a fair start, the 5th Punjab Infantry began to retire in open

skirmishing order, with much deliberation and in perfect order. The enemy now began to flourish their standards on the sky-line, and opened fire, whilst the bolder commenced to rush down the incline towards us. And now the order was given by Major Pratt to the rear line of skirmishers to fire a volley at 600 yards. This volley was very well delivered, and, watching the enemy's right, I saw three or more Afghans roll head over heels, to rise no more. Our fire on the enemy's left was probably as well delivered; for during that day, although pursued for four miles, the enemy never again ventured within 600 yards of our lines of skirmishers, who retired in turns as regularly as if on a parade-ground. Though the enemy continued to fire at us for three hours, only one sepoy was wounded. The squadron of the 5th Punjab Cavalry, under a good soldier, Major Stewart, sat motionless in their saddles, inside the rear line of skirmishers, retiring as they retired; and though many bullets whizzed over them, none sped true. After three miles' march, we had cleared the hills on each side of our road. Those on our right flank were held by parties of the 92nd, who had accounted for several Afghans, and would have done so for many more had they not been ordered to join our retiring force. The hill last occupied by them on our right was of considerable height, and at some distance from the road, and the officer in charge of our guns, thinking our men were Afghans, sent one shell at them, which whizzed harmlessly over. The

regimental call was immediately sounded. It, however, was not heard, and a second gun was adjusted on them, when a messenger fortunately arrived, saying who the party were. At Ghulam Hyder Khan's Killa we were ordered to turn to the left, leaving the high hill in front of the village on our right, and, marching through the rocky bed of a feeder of the Kabul river, we eventually struck the Ghazni road, two miles this side of Kabul. On the left and right of our march bodies of armed men were seen, and some long shots were fired at us; and as we approached Kabul, the Bala Hissar and Takt-i-Shah heights were constantly lighted up with gun-flashes, which somewhat surprised us, nor, indeed, until we had entered the Deh Mazung gorge, which was held by part of the Guides, did we hear of the severe encounter that had occurred the day before, and that the men we had seen on our flanks were part of the large force advancing from all directions to surround us. At 8 P.M. that evening Major Pratt reported the safe arrival of the baggage and rear-guard to General Baker, and the arrival of our brigade at Sherpur relieved the garrison of some anxiety.

During the night of the 12th December a sharp look-out was kept, as it was rumoured that a large band of Ghazis would attack the north side of contonments, where the weakest points lay. The open gap at the west end had been closed by locking the timbers of the Amir's gun-carriages in laagar, and the whole line of the Behmaru

hills was manned as far as the troops allowed. The night, however, was allowed to slip by quietly, though shots were often heard on the hills above the Bala Hissar.

CHAPTER X.

Capture of the Takt-i-Shah position.—General Baker's attack.—The 92nd Highlanders lead.—Death of Lieutenant Forbes and Colour-Sergeant Drummond.—A Village stops the Return Home.—The Door is burnt.—The Homeward March.—Afghan Standards.—General Roberts.—Capture of a Village by the 5th Punjab Infantry.—Brutal Murder of a Private of the 92nd.—Disposition of Troops on the Night of the 13th.—Attack threatened.

DECEMBER 13th.—The Afghans now held a strong position on the Takt-i-Shah height, as well as the slopes on the eastern side and the long spur running down to the village of the Bin-i-Hissar. As the efforts made to drive them out of the position from the Bala Hissar heights had failed on the 12th, General Roberts determined to attack their position from below with General Baker's brigade, and as his attack developed the upper brigade was to advance from above.

About 9 o'clock the following force commenced to form up outside Sherpur, to the left of the King's garden: four guns G-3 Royal Artillery, four guns

Derajat Mountain Battery, the 92nd Highlanders, the Guides Infantry, wing of the 3rd Sikhs, one squadron of the 9th Lancers ; this squadron, as well as the rest of the cavalry, were afterwards engaged in a different position. While the different men were forming up a loud cheer arose from the ranks of the 92nd Highlanders, in front of whom General Baker was talking to the senior officers, and the men immediately began to remove the great coats coiled round their shoulders, and to pile them according to companies. It was evident from this that the 92nd were to have the honour of taking the lead in the fighting that was to take place. The brigade soon moved off; as we crossed the Kabul river numbers of sulky-looking Afghans were seen gathered about the environs of the city.

After leaving the Bala Hissar the road ran straight to Bin-i-Hissar, passing several villages on our left. These, as we afterwards found out, were full of armed men, while in the gateways of each sat many Afghans who looked more villainous and scowling than usual. About half a mile this side of Bin-i-Hissar a halt was made, and the dispositions to attack the enemy rapidly effected. On the right of the road, almost rising out of the village, ran the long spur, more than a mile in length, which joined the Takt-i-Shah peak at right angles. On this spur about 250 yards from the village was a dip, caused by a small ravine in the side of the hill, which partly separated this portion from the main ridge. Around the village below were thick orchards,

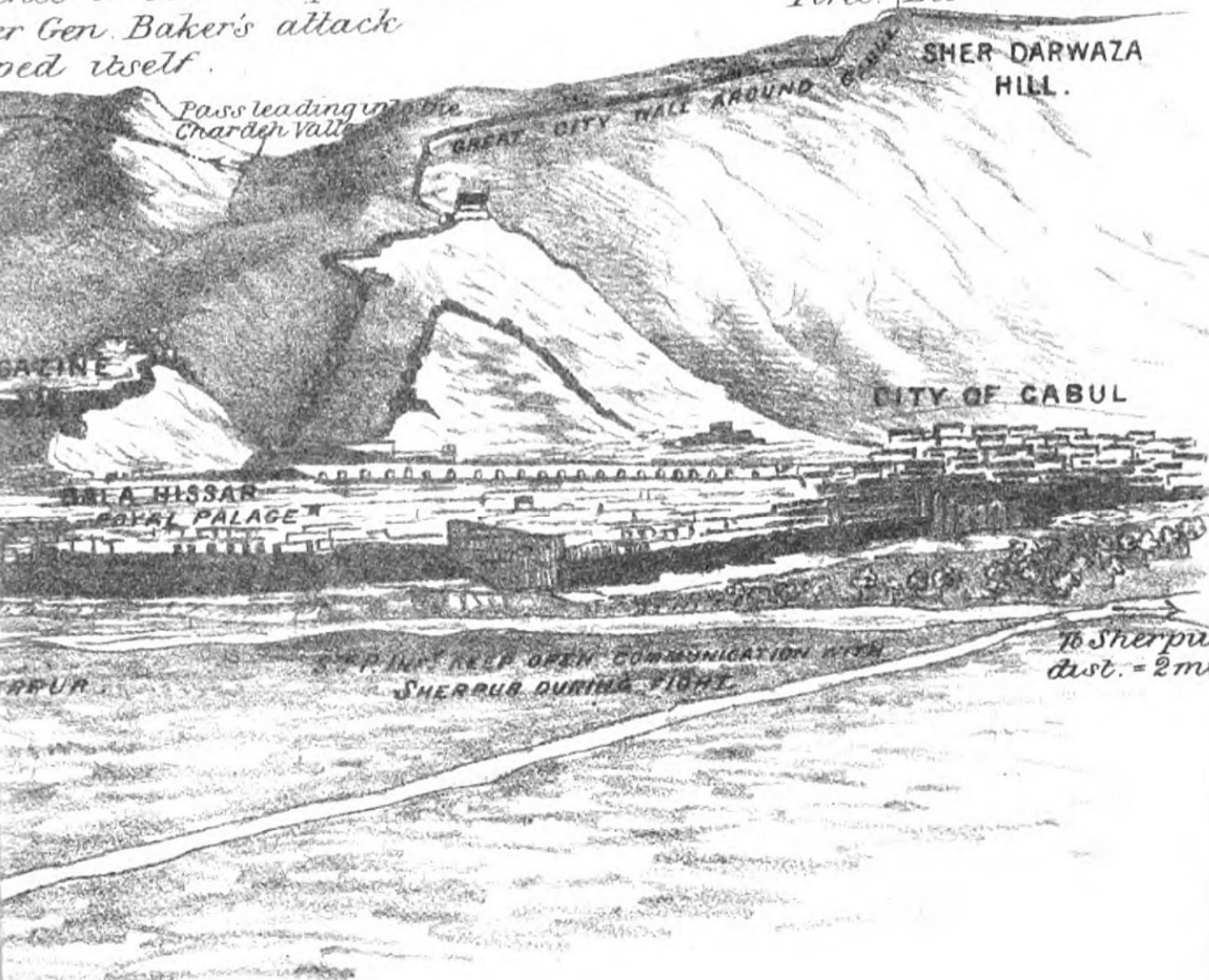
and the country was cut up with ditches, which, after our attack had developed, were found to be full of Afghans.

On the detached portion of the hill the Afghans were collected in great force, and displayed many standards, apparently thinking that our troops were about to march round this spur. Between this portion and the Takt-i-Shah but few Afghans were visible. The four guns of G-3 Royal Artillery, and the four guns of the mountain battery, were now drawn up in line facing this hill, about 1,200 yards distant, and commenced rapidly to shell the position. Under cover of this fire the 92nd Highlanders advanced, supported by the Guides' Infantry, while two companies of the 3rd Sikhs deployed to the left towards the village. Directly our plan of attack was evident, the Afghans began to swarm up the hill, with more standards. Their comrades in the Takt-i-Shah, also, began to detach men to their support. The point of attack by the 92nd was to be by the right of the dip mentioned before.* A large swamp in front of the batteries caused a little delay, as it had to be skirted, and once across this the 92nd, led by

* It has since been pointed out to me that the advance was first directed on the village of Bin-i-Hissar. When the enemy saw our approach, they turned out in great numbers on the hill, with the intention of working up and joining their friends holding the Takht. In consequence of this, our infantry suddenly changed front to the right and made for the point of attack mentioned. To the ordinary looker-on it appeared as if this change was the original order of attack.

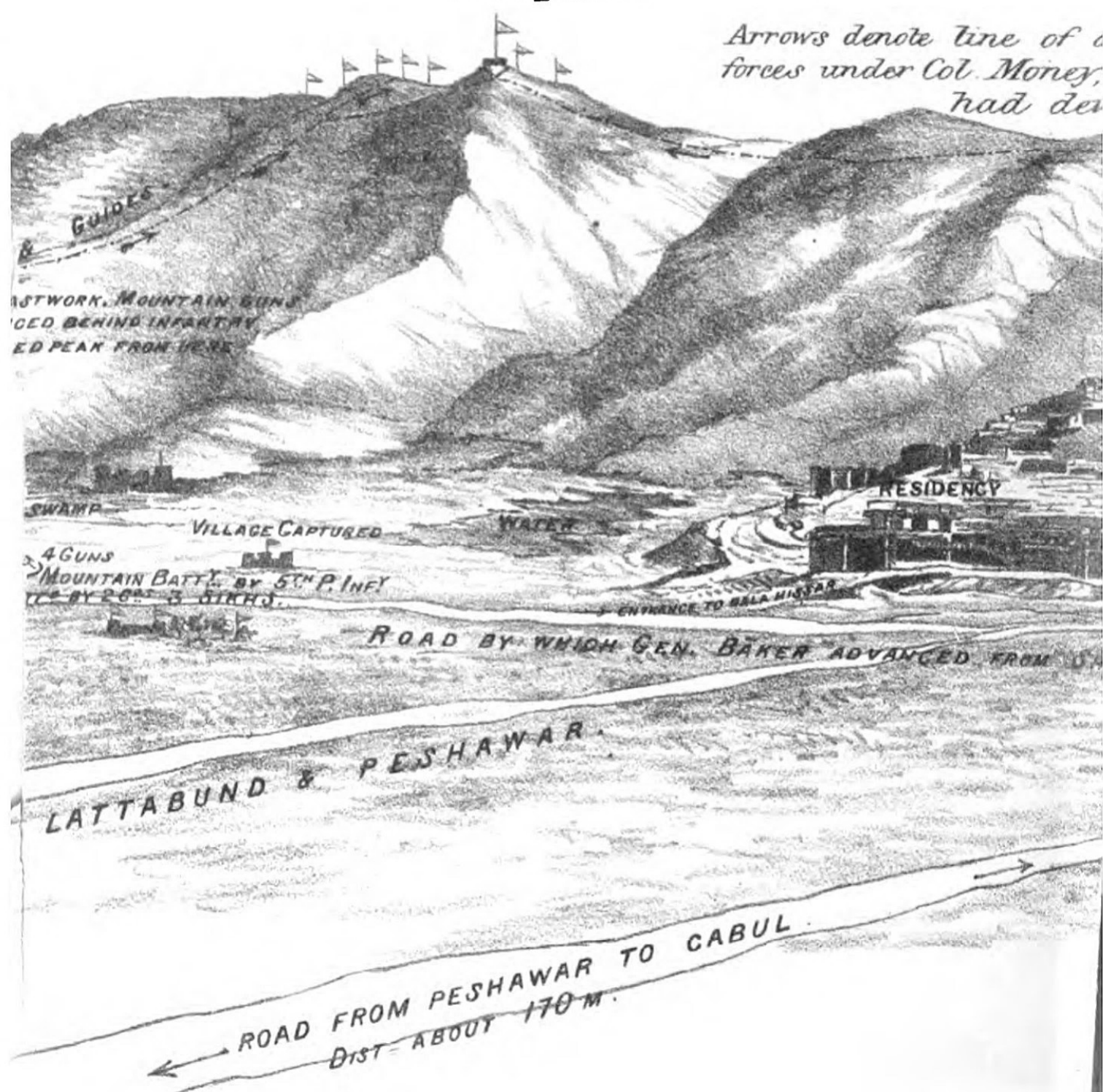
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Gen Macpherson's
Force. | Dec^r 12th to 14th



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TAKHT-I-SHAH PEAK
About 2000' above plain.



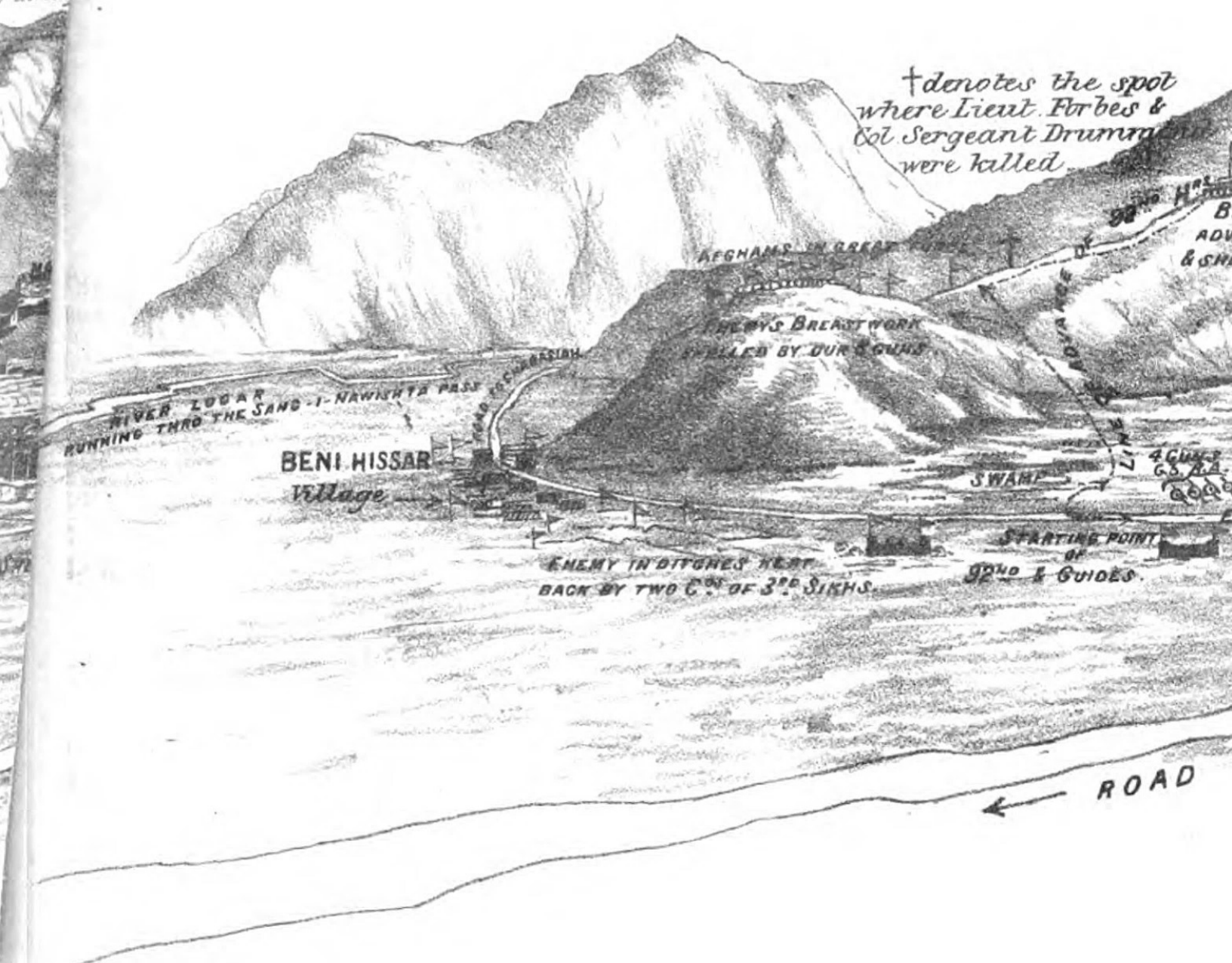
CAPTURE OF TAKHT-I-SHAM.

BY
92ND HIGHLANDERS' ^{NO} CORPS OF GUARDS
ON

13 December, 1879.

↑↑ denote Enemy's positions.

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Major White, advanced without a check. The rapid and well-directed fire from the eight guns on the plain did not appear to dishearten the enemy much, although most of the shells seemed to burst just over the sungurs. Directly a shell burst, the crouching Afghans jumped up and showed themselves, and at the same time poured in a heavy fire on the 92nd advancing. Having once gained the base of the hill, some cover was obtained from the heavy fire poured in them from their left.

The hill to be stormed, though not more than 200 feet, was exceedingly steep and trying to climb, especially to men carrying sixty rounds or more. The 92nd rapidly began their task. Standing behind the mountain guns, I eagerly watched the hills with my glasses.

To the extreme right of the Highlanders an officer with five or six men had gained the summit. Without waiting for breathing-time, he and his men ran eagerly along the crest of the hill in the direction of the Takt-i-Shah; and in the sky-line, I can recall him now, as I saw him then, his drawn sword waving from side to side and keeping time with the swing of his kilt. Two Gordons are on his right, and two or more on his left, and they advance in open order, each man firmly grasping his rifle, which is held ready for the foe.

Looking ahead of them, a red standard, accompanied, as far as can be seen, by a number of Afghans who are urged on by an old man mounted on a pony,

is rapidly coming against them, and the object the Highlanders are after is now clear. The old man boldly urges on his followers, and only fifty yards now intervene, when the men with the standard open out and take cover behind the rocks. The Highland officer runs steadily towards them, just a little ahead of his men, and he is evidently determined to capture the standard. Only thirty yards now intervene, when from behind a rock I can see an Afghan slowly rise on his knee and take deliberate aim with his rifle. The officer appears only to look at the standard, and inwardly I feel inclined to shout to him ; a puff of smoke issues from the rock, and he is suddenly struck down. He falls backward, his sword still grasped in his hand, and he makes an effort to rise on his elbow. Poor fellow, a ball has passed through his body above the kilt. My glasses drop, for the Afghans are rushing on him ; but another officer, who continues looking on, afterwards told me that a Highlander stood over his fallen body and bravely defended it, shooting one and endeavouring to bayonet another. The Afghan thus attacked, seized the Highlander's rifle in his hand, and for a few seconds a deadly struggle took place, during which he was cut down from behind and killed, and then the officer he had tried to save. Such is the manner in which Colour-Sergeant Drummond and Lieutenant Forbes of the 92nd met their death. With the naked eye the red standard and its little company could be seen advancing in the bravest

manner. As the main body of the 92nd neared the summit, so heavy a fire was poured into them from their left that for a few seconds the Gordons hesitated. Lieutenant Dick-Cunyngham, commanding the leading company, now raised his sword, and called upon his men to follow, who, acting on their celebrated regimental motto,* *Nemo me impune lacessit!*” dashed over the crest, and in another moment the hill was ours, while the Afghans fled in all directions. As the summit was gained the standard-bearers came under our fire, and the red pennant fell suddenly to the ground.

Lieutenant Grant, who was supporting Dick-Cunyngham, had a narrow escape that day. As he breasted the hill his eye met the deadly barrel of a rifle covering his body at about twenty yards. The Afghan fired, and the ball struck him sideways on the sporran of the kilt, indenting it and passing off harmlessly, but rolling the wearer over backwards. Grant was, however, equal to the occasion, and, picking himself up, he seized a rifle and shot his enemy dead.

The Guides Infantry, led by Colonel Jenkins, closely supported the 92nd, and finally drove the enemy from the detached hill, which had been held so obstinately. The rapid fire from the crest of the hill showed that the retreating Afghans, who were flying in all directions, were getting a hot time of it. The four mountain guns, with two companies of the 3rd

* It is the motto of the thistle.

Sikhs, were now ordered up to the captured hill to cover the advance of the infantry against the Takt-i-Shah, still in the possession of the enemy, with orders to follow up their advance.

Even as we crossed the swamp stray bullets were dropping over us, and one gunner was wounded in the leg. As we reached the foot of the hill "Pass the word for the cavalry," "Pass the word for the cavalry," was duly sent on. The wounded of the 92nd, rapidly dressed by Dr. Langridge, who had this day been exposed to the heavy fire directed against the regiment, were now coming down the hill. On reaching the crest of the hill we had a good view of all the surrounding country, which was dotted for a large space with Afghans, many of whom were flying along the road to Charasiab.

In the valley between our ridge and the next were several hundred Afghans, many of them mounted, slowly retreating towards the next hill; and we now saw the explanation of the call for the cavalry. The cavalry, except a few with the guns, were then engaged in another direction, and on this occasion they would in their advance have had to ride through the narrow village of Bin-i-Hissar, and would have been exposed to heavy fire before their work could commence. However, on more than two occasions, had a regiment of cavalry followed up in support of an infantry attack at a safe distance, and then, on the defeat of the enemy, been sent in pursuit, the punishment inflicted by them on the Afghans might have

been very severe. The mountain guns immediately came into action, for the enemy were now out of accurate rifle-range. The Afghans were retreating with an aggravating slowness and deliberation towards the spur running parallel with us, and it was really some pleasure to see the rapid acceleration of their movements, especially of those who were mounted, as one or two well-directed shells burst over them.

The east end of the spur in our possession, overlooking Bin-i-Hissar, was now held by two companies of the Guides. The 92nd and Guides, after a very short halt, proceeded up the spur towards the Takt-i-Shah peak, at least 1,500 yards distant in a crow line. The peak itself is at about 1,700 feet from the level of the plain where the action had commenced, and the last 400 feet over the hill-side were exceedingly steep and perpendicular.

While the main body of troops were advancing, I counted the dead around, and saw comparatively few bodies. The first 600 yards of the advance along the spur was over open ground rising up into a commanding knoll, formed by a natural prominence of the hill. From each of these knolls was a sungur, or stone wall, running right across the line of our advance ; from the centre of the knoll floated a standard. No heads were visible, and it looked as if the Afghans were hiding for a rush. Looking on from the rear, we watch the 92nd advance ; a solemn silence prevailed. The foremost line is within a few

yards of the breast-work ; no shot has been fired, and no enemy can be seen with our glasses. An officer now jumps forward and seizes the standard ; he is unhurt ; and those looking on breathe freely again. The enemy had left the standard to deceive us, for no Afghans were found behind the sungurs ; all had retreated up the hill.

The battery now advanced to this position and opened fire on the Takt-i-Shah and the peaks, each of which bristled with the enemy, covering the advance of the infantry up the really difficult climb that remained. The range was now between thirteen and sixteen hundred yards. The extreme steepness of the hill, with its boulders and crevices, gave our troops certain cover, and, in spite of a heavy fire poured against them, our men advanced steadily, with hardly any casualties. The guns required considerable elevation, and our shells now rapidly burst above the many and variegated standards fixed on the peak. The enemy's attention, too, was turned to his left flank, where, from the north, part of Macpherson's brigade was rapidly advancing. Though the position held by the Afghans was formidably strong by nature, and afforded them good cover, they were unable to face our unbroken advance, and as the bayonets of both brigades rapidly approached, they commenced to waver and then fled, leaving the actual possession of this long-contested peak to the 5th Goorkhas, a detachment of the 72nd, and 3rd Sikhs, who beat us by a few minutes.

The greater portion of the enemy fled along the high ridge leading from the Takt-i-Shah towards the hills above Charasiab. At about 1,200 yards distant they began to get together, and were joined by numbers of the retreating mass below. Though beaten off, they had not been thrashed, for here they commenced beating their call-drums and waving their pennants ironically. The mountain battery followed the infantry, and had just gained the summit, when an order was flashed up, ordering both it and the 92nd Regiment to return towards Sherpur. The Guides were not retired till an hour afterwards. The exceedingly steep descent on the east side of the hill severely tried the battery mules, but the transport animals suffered most. Owing to the paucity of drivers two or three were often tied together one behind the other. With true mulish obstinacy, and partly owing to indifferent loading, one beast, perhaps, refused to move, or suddenly stopped, the animal in front of him receiving a violent and sudden check, which threw him off his balance, and then the others rolled down after him. As we left the summit of the hill the enemy further down the range were vigorously beating their drums in a most annoying manner, and looked as if they were trying to summon up courage to re-advance on the Guides, then holding the position nearest to them. In the meantime heavy artillery-fire was heard from the plain below, where G-3 Royal Artillery had been stationed, as well as the rattle of musketry.

The Afghans in the villages we had passed, as well as those lying in the cover of ditches and orchards, had discovered themselves, and threatened the guns below. Their action was late, for had they attacked us vigorously from below in the rear while our troops were first advancing against the hills, the fighting would probably have been desperate. The two companies of the 3rd Sikhs, under Major Griffiths, kept the enemy back from the east; while G-3 Royal Artillery vigorously shelled the villages, and soon emptied them, or apparently so, of their occupants; for as we neared the plain numbers of Afghans could be seen rushing across the open towards the Bala Hissar, and the gap which led into the city, some of whom were killed by the 92nd. Near the foot of the hill the battery was halted on a spur, and the guns unlimbered to rest the mules.

From our position we commanded an extensive view of all the plains and villages laying between Bin-i-Hissar and the Bala Hissar. The advance company of the 92nd was now approaching a village that we had passed in the morning, which to them must have looked quite deserted, though we, from our higher position, could see several heads awaiting their approach behind the parapet. The Highlanders ahead had all but reached the gateway when suddenly some rapid puffs of smoke appeared from the loop-holes, and through glasses it was almost amusing to watch the surprise of the men, who evidently thought the place deserted, and, there being

no cover near, they had to retreat. The skirmishers took cover in the ditches around. The mountain battery soon after joined the 92nd. The fire of G-3 Royal Artillery was then directed against the gateway, but apparently made no impression on it, each shot going through and making only a small opening. No ladders were at hand, and blowing the gates up with powder appeared the only plan left. The difficulty, however, was solved. The artillery fire ceased, and some straw around the gateway was set alight. Whilst the doors were burning, the Corps of Guides joined us from above, and orders arrived directing General Baker's brigade to return to Sherpur, and leave the capture of the village to the 5th Punjab Infantry under Major Pratt.

The cavalry under General Massy were in the meantime busy with the enemy around Siah Sung hills, for the ground covered by the Afghans that day was most extensive. The squadron of the 9th Lancers which that morning had been drawn up to the right of our brigade, lost heavily; Captain Butson, the senior unwounded officer, fell while leading a charge, shot through the heart. Captain Chisholm was shot through the thigh, and Lieutenant Trower and eight men wounded. The Sergeant-Major, a man respected by all ranks, was also killed, and three troopers with him. The charge was over, but, seeing some Afghans hiding in a nullah, he called a few of his men and rode at them. The Afghans quietly awaited their approach and reserved their fire.

The Sergeant-Major, a man of great weight, was not that day riding his favourite charger, but a waziri horse, who stopped short on the brink of the dip, probably seeing the men below, and his rider received a ball through the body, two of his men falling with him. He was well-known in the Kuram Field Force; his death was regretted by all. Captain Chisholm, though severely wounded, brought his squadron out of action. The 5th Punjab Cavalry, under Major Williams, supported the charge of the Lancers, Major Hammond and Stewart of this regiment getting well home, as did also the Sikh Guide Cavalry, led by Major Stewart and Lieutenant Hughes. The loss of General Baker's infantry had been comparatively small, and his brigade started for Sherpur in high spirits, feeling that the supremacy of our arms had been maintained on all sides ; for the Afghans had been defeated that day at all points, both by cavalry and infantry.

On our return journey the men of the battery had possessed themselves of one or two of the flimsy Afghan standards which had been captured, and these were triumphantly shouldered and brought in. The presence of these standards might have caused some loss of life, for we had at first, when descending from the Takt-i-Shah, been mistaken for the enemy, and a salvo of artillery had nearly been directed against us. On the following day an order was issued that no standards captured from the enemy were to be carried unfurled.

When nearing the Kabul river, the wounded

officers coming from the Bala Hissar hill passed us. They had that morning run a dangerous gauntlet. On reaching the bottom of the hill, above the magazine, they were met by the flying Afghans whom the fire of our guns had driven out of the villages on the Bin-i-Hissar road. Strange to say, both officers and men were allowed to escape untouched, the Afghans being deterred, probably, by the determined front shown by the guard with each dooly, who fixed bayonets. As we neared Sherpur, General Roberts and his staff were drawn up on the road, watching the troops file past, the General in his own pleasant way addressing each commanding officer, and making his usual kind enquiries about the wounded.

The 5th Punjab Infantry were now proceeding to capture the village mentioned before. The place was surrounded, advantage being taken of all cover ; while a few men got close under the walls, which protected them from the fire from the loop-holes, others procured poles and logs which were planted against the rear wall, a few feet lower than the others. Some men managed to reach the top here, and while the attention of the defenders was thus partly distracted the main body rushed at the now burnt doorway, which gave way to the pressure. A Sikh havildar, the first man in, was shot, cut down, and dangerously wounded ; Major Pratt, the officer commanding, close beside him, escaped unhurt, and in a few minutes the defenders, who numbered

twenty-four, were all slain, and the fort was in our possession. The 5th Punjab Infantry had previously been engaged with a number of the enemy flying through the willows outside the Bala Hissar, when keeping open our communications with Sherpur, killing and wounding upwards of twenty.

The defeat of the enemy on all sides was fortunate for us, as information had been received that a great combined attack would have been made that night on Sherpur, which, with Macpherson's brigade away, would have been defended with difficulty, owing to its great area, and the weak points on the north and north-east sides. The city people had agreed to join the tribesmen, who were moderately estimated at 20,000 men, the majority armed with Snider rifles.

The next day we heard of the dreadful death that had befallen one of the privates of the 92nd Highlanders, whose body had been found in one of the villages passed in the morning. This man, who was sick, fell out, and was probably enticed toward the gate of the village by the offer of milk or water. His body was afterwards found inside, quite stripped and mutilated, his face and head being shattered and burnt. This had been caused by an explosion of powder forced into his mouth, whether during life or after is not known. He was only recognised as belonging to the 92nd by his regimental check socks which had been left on. The sight of a cold-blooded murder like this was calculated to excite feelings of horror

and revenge against the perpetrators of such an outrage.

On the night of the 13th December our position was as follows :—

General Macpherson's brigade was concentrated on the Sher Darwaza hill, south of the city, the Takt-i-Shah being held by the 5th Goorkhas.

General Baker's brigade and the 92nd, and Guides, with cavalry and Royal Horse Artillery, were in Sherpur.

The 12th Bengal Cavalry were in the neighbourhood of Budkhak, twelve miles on the Peshawar road; while the Luttabund post was held by 700 men of the 28th Punjab Native Infantry and 23rd Pioneers and two mountain guns, all under the command of Colonel Hudson.

The night passed quietly. All was ready inside for a night attack. General Hugh Gough, V.C., who commanded the Behmaru line of heights, with his Adjutant Major Hanna, slept on the ground that night, on the floor of the 5th Goorkha mess-tent, to be ready at a moment's notice. Not a shot was fired during the night.

CHAPTER XI.

Capture of Asmai Heights.—Description of the Enemy's Position.—Our Advance.—The Afghan Guns.—Western Sungur.—Captain Battye and Lieutenant Egerton wounded.—Captain Vousden, 5th Punjab Cavalry, charges the Enemy.—The Eastern Sungur.—Lance-Corporal Sellar.—Our Success.—The Conical Hill.—Macpherson sees a fresh Afghan Army.—The Conical Hill is attacked. The first man hit.—The Red Standard.—Death of Captain Spens.—Captain Hammond.—Our Concentration inside Sherpur.

DECEMBER 14th.—Soon after daybreak the enemy were on the alert, and, by no means disheartened by their discomfiture on the previous day, streamed out in large numbers from the city, and Deh Mazung gorge, and occupied the Koh-i-Asmai hill above the suburb of Kabul, Deh-i-Afghani, whose summit was lined with standards. This movement was probably part of a well-laid plan on General Mahomed Jan's part to cut off from Sherpur the retreat of General Macpherson's brigade, then occupying the Bala Hissar heights opposite.

The movements of the enemy having been observed from Sherpur, General Roberts determined to drive

him from his position, and General Baker's brigade was again told off for this purpose.

About 9 o'clock the following troops defiled out under the Western or General's gateway :—

225 men of the 72nd Highlanders, Colonel Brownlow.

One company of the 92nd under Captain Gordon; half only went to the assault, the rest remaining with the guns.

The Guides Infantry, Colonel Jenkins.

The 5th Punjab Infantry, Major Pratt.

Four guns G-3 Royal Artillery, Major Craster.

Four guns Derajat Mountain Battery, Major Swinley.

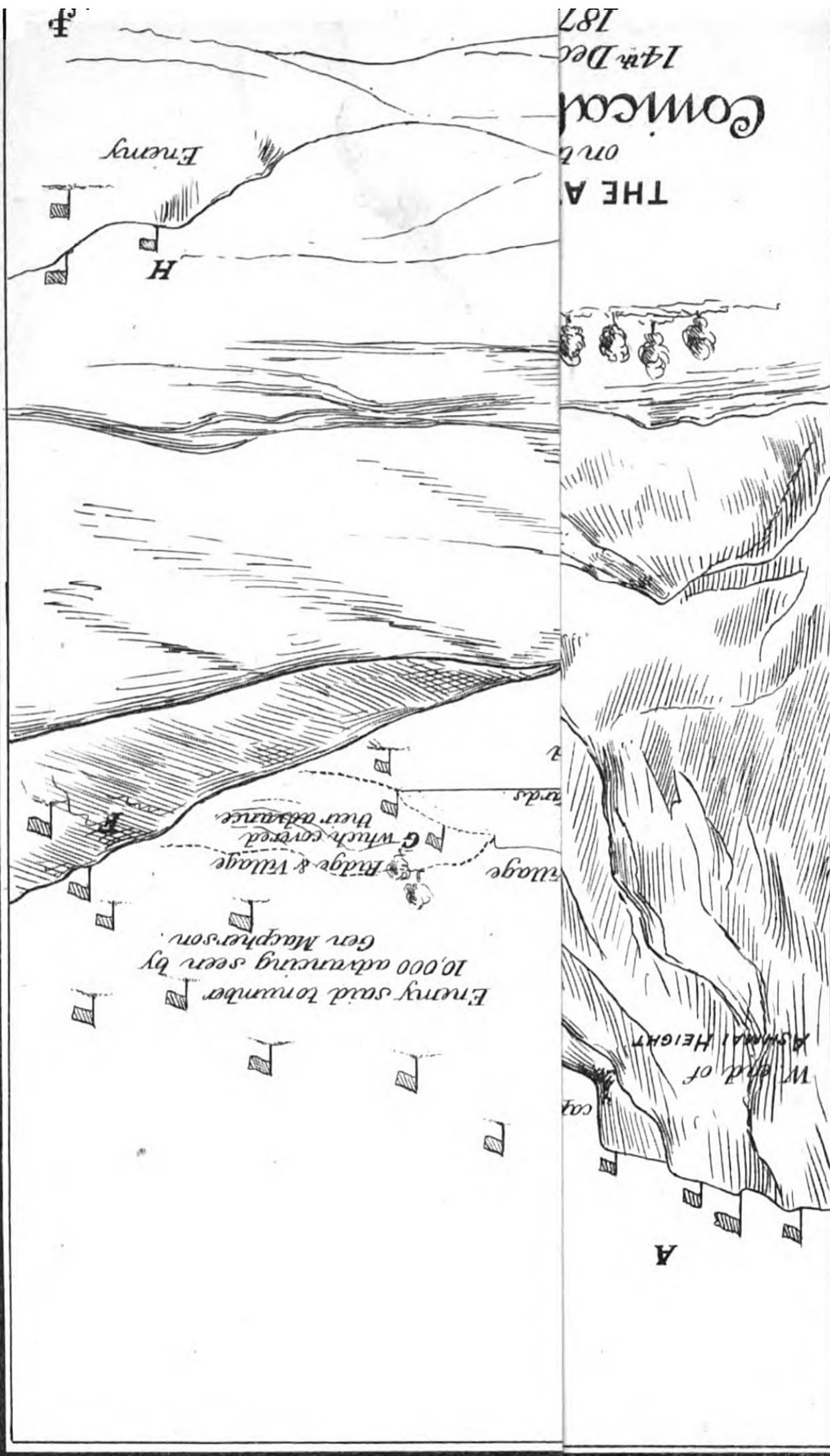
The 14th Bengal Lancers, Colonel Ross.

On leaving the gateway the force marched due west to the high ground, on which was situated the village of Bilund Killa, the route being parallel with the Asmai heights, though about fourteen hundred yards distant. The Koh-i-Asmai height, most formidable-looking, rose 1,000 feet above the level of the plain. The summit of the hill was about 500 yards in length; it was defended at each end by sungurs; the nature of the ground gave splendid cover, while it overlooked and commanded all the approaches. The range of hills connected with it ran east and west. At the west end of the position, now held in great force, the ground dipped down very perpendicularly some 400 feet, and joined a kotul, B, called the Aliabad Kotul, over which a small path ran into

the Chardeh valley. From this kotul the line of hills again rose up some 150 feet, and terminated in a sugar-loafed eminence known as the "Conical hill," C; continuing westwards, the line gradually sloped down for about 100 yards to a small cluster of rocks, D. Below D was a dip, a gorge which was quite out of fire and reach of the Conical hill E. From E the line extended onwards for about 600 yards, and finally ended in an abrupt wall and hill, F, which was higher than the Asmai height, and eventually ran back and joined the hills surrounding the west of the lake, by the Nanuchi Kotul. From the south of F a spur ran down to the plain below, to a large village and graveyard, G.

The whole of the long line from A to F was held by the Afghans, whose force was chiefly concentrated on A, the Asmai heights, while only two standards were visible at F. The enemy also held a position, marked H, on some high ground about a mile beyond and west of Bilund Killa. The villages on the north side also contained some adversaries; indeed, that day so numerous were our opponents that it was difficult to say in what position they might not show themselves.

Once arrived at Bilund Killa there was, as usual, no delay; as on the 13th the eight field and mountain guns were drawn up in a line on some level ground facing the Aliabad Kotul, and opened a continuous fire on the west end of the Asmai heights. The Afghans then fired at us several shots in return,



from the mountain guns belonging to Wali Mahomed, which had been sent up there on the 12th instant, and had been abandoned by his followers. Two shots struck the ground near G-3 Royal Artillery front, and one fell close in front of the mountain battery, but did no harm, as the shells were fired without fuses. Again, as on the 13th, a swamp barred the advance towards the hill, and necessitated a detour being made. Once beyond this, the storming-party, composed of the 72nd, half company of the 92nd, and the Guides Infantry, went rapidly ahead, and the Kotul and conical peak were quickly seized. Leaving the peak in the care of thirty-three men of the 72nd and a Dograh company of the Guides, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Clarke of the 72nd, Colonel Jenkins advanced with the remainder of his force to the grand assault on the heights ; and formidable indeed did this rocky wall appear from below.

While this was going on, the four mountain guns, escorted by 100 men of the 5th Punjab Native Infantry, were ordered up to the Conical hill, G-3 Royal Artillery remaining behind with the 5th Punjab Infantry in reserve. The battery soon gained the steep base of the line, and rapidly toiled up. Colonel Jenkins' force was approaching the western end of the heights, and, being now much nearer, we could see the rapid puffs of smoke from the summit, and hear the terrible rattle of musketry, from one sungur in particular, looking towards the Chardeh valley. This turned out to be a party of Ghazis

making a death-stand. The main body of the enemy could not bear the approach of cold steel, and the mass of them fled, leaving their Ghazi friends in the lurch, all of whom were killed. Once well on the face of the hill, our advancing line obtained some cover. On the face of the hill two officers were severely wounded, Captain Battye of the Guides, and Lieutenant Egerton of the 72nd; both were shot through the neck, Battye's wound proving the more serious of the two, the ball just touching the spine and producing very serious symptoms. Both officers, however, made good recoveries, and have lived and fought another day.

On capturing the western end of the heights, a number of the enemy escaped down the eastern sides to the cover of Deh-i-Afghani, while some fled down the southern side towards the bed of the Kabul river. General Roberts now ordered two guns, afterwards strengthened to four, of F-A Royal Horse Artillery, outside the western gateway, under an escort of cavalry and a wing of the 3rd Sikhs under Major Griffiths. The Sikhs advanced and skirmished out towards Deh-i-Afghani, while the horse-artillery fire told with splendid effect on the Afghans fleeing down the eastern face of the Asmai height, as well as in the suburb of Deh-i-Afghani, from which the enemy rushed out, a large number making for the direction of Siah Sung. It was now that a squadron of that good regiment, the 5th Punjab Cavalry, distinguished itself. Receiving urgent orders to turn out, Captain

Vousden, who commanded the squadron, being ready with a dozen troopers a little before the rest, and seeing the enemy ahead, dashed into the middle of a number who had left the cover of a village, and, striking well home, killed five with his own hand, the troopers behind him well seconding his efforts. The rest of the enemy fled back to the cover of the village, from the walls and roofs of which so telling a fire was directed that the squadron was compelled to retire, five out of the few who first went ahead being severely wounded. Viewed from above, this little charge appeared a very brilliant affair, and the exclamation of two officers of the 3rd Sikhs looking on was, "Well, whoever that fellow is, he deserves the Victoria Cross"—which has since been bestowed upon Captain Vousden.

Although the western end of Asmai had fallen, the strong peaks and sungurs on the east end were still held by a number of Ghazis, who determined to die, but not without a hard fight, and some prospect of entering Paradise happily by having first killed a kaffir. Our men, of course, were not to be held back by these patriotic fanatics. The flanks of the enemy's position were first invested with our fire, and then a front rush was made, led by Lance-Corporal Sellar, of the 72nd, who endeavoured to seize a standard. He was immediately attacked by a Ghazi, who leapt wildly down on him, and with his deadly knife endeavoured to cleave his skull. The soldier stoutly guarded his head with his rifle,

but at last fell with a severe gash in the arm. The Ghazi turned to regain the sungur, but was shot dead by an officer of the Guides. The remainder of the Ghazis were then killed, and the Koh-i-Asmai heights were in our hands. The enemy, now flying in the direction of Budkhak, were pursued by two Royal Horse Artillery guns, some cavalry, and a portion of the 92nd. It is thus evident that the great tactical skill displayed by Colonel Jenkins in attacking this formidable position had been crowned with brilliant success. We had driven the enemy from a position of enormous natural strength. Indeed, only those who have seen them can properly realize the difficult heights our troops had to take in the neighbourhood of the Kabul city. So complete did our success appear that Major Griffiths, with the 3rd Sikhs, had, at the time, been ordered to take Deh-i-Afghani, and a few shells had been thrown into the city.

Let us now return to the Conical hill, where incidents soon after occurred by which our forces were compelled to retire within Sherpur. From our position large numbers of Afghans who had been driven off the heights were visible retiring towards the bed of the Kabul river; they really appeared to dot the plain for upwards of half a mile. I recollect chuckling to myself as the battery was ascending the hill, and thinking, "Hurrah! at last we have got on the hills; it is our turn to crow and let these Afghans try and turn us out." The guns immediately came

into action, the shells caused a considerable increase in the speed of the retiring enemy, especially the horsemen, each shell as it burst successfully calling forth applause from the lookers on. Indeed, we were all very merry.

The force on the cone was now as follows: thirty-three men of the 72nd Highlanders, a Dograh company of the Guides, under a Native officer; four mountain guns, under a guard of one hundred of the 5th Punjab Infantry, with a transport officer; the whole being under the command of Colonel Clarke, the senior officer of the 72nd present.

When the battery reached their position, a few Afghans were seen on our right on the high position marked F; but the distance was considerable. A picket of the 72nd held the position one hundred yards in front of the guns, marked D, above and commanding a dip below. This picket was afterwards withdrawn, a trifling incident in itself, but fraught with disaster to us afterwards.

On our left flank,* on the Chardeh side of the Kotul, was a small house and one or two enclosures, while on our left rear a spur ran down from the Asinai heights, on the ground in the hollow of which was a large musjid and walled enclosure; on our left flank and front, in the plain below, towards the Chardeh valley, the ground was very swampy and cut up with ditches. On our extreme left in this plain, at about 1,600 yards, was a high-walled village,

* "F" in the plan represents our front.

and on the left front, about the same distance, was a large village, with walled enclosures and trees around. All these points were soon to be used by the Afghans in their subsequent attack upon our position.

The enemy continued their retreat as far as the bed of a feeder to the river Kabul, until out of artillery-range. They then began to assume some formation, making a long detour towards the village marked G, on our left front. The plains to the left of F were hidden from our view by the hills in our front, and we were unable to see a fresh body of Afghans coming towards us in this direction, and said to number 10,000. The approach of this fresh body of troops against us was seen by General Macpherson from the Bala Hissar hill, and reported to General Roberts. That the newly-arrived force must have been very great, is proved by the somewhat amusing reply received by General Roberts. A message was heliographed up to General Macpherson on the Bala Hissar hill, asking whether the enemy were in force on the plain to the west of Asmai. The answer was: "Yes; the plain reminds me of Epsom downs on the Derby-day." In our position we were not aware of their advance.

About this time a troop of the 14th Bengal Lancers rode over the Aliabad Kotul, and halted at its base. They appeared to have come to reconnoitre, and after watching the retiring enemy for a short time, retraced their steps, some of their sowars wounded.

The time on the hill was in the interval passing very pleasantly. We had shelled a number of Afghans hiding under the wall of a village, and made them run and break cover.

The retiring enemy were in the meantime collecting themselves, and suddenly turning to their right, they advanced rapidly towards the village G, and the cover of the hill F, joining hands with the fresh troops coming against us. We soon became aware that our position was in turn to be attacked. Bodies of the enemy could be seen rushing from the cover of the village and disappearing behind the spur which joined our hill about 1,300 yards distant. A few seconds afterwards a red flag appeared on this ridge, and then several in succession, each one being planted higher up and nearer our position, while a heavy rifle-fire was poured against us, which, owing to the great distance, did little harm. All eyes were now turned in this direction, and the fire of the four guns directed against the ridge, though apparently beautifully directed, was ineffective, as the standards kept popping higher and higher, and men could be seen rushing in small bodies across the hollow in the hill on our front quite undeterred by the fire of our infantry. At the same time detached bodies of men skirmished out across the fields along our left front, as far as the musjid near the spur of the Asmai height on our left rear. This ridge they commenced to occupy, getting us under a cross fire, though the distance was great.

They also occupied the little house at the foot of the kotul, in spite of our fire. In this they were encouraged by a horseman, who rode at full gallop along the road below, waving his sword wildly over his head. Many rifles were directed at him, but he reached the south side of the house, and leaped the low wall, and was under cover in a second. He was followed by two more horsemen, who rode equally as furiously.

A determined advance, after this, was made by the enemy on all points, and the flags in the ditches on our left below advanced in a most aggravating way, each flag accompanied by a certain number of followers. Bullets now began to whiz about the cone in all directions from our front, left flank, and left rear. Within the next five minutes the fire increased, the enemy creeping up under cover of the rocks on our left, and getting near the guns, so that the bullets whizzed round the guns, especially the piece Major Swinley was firing, which, being near the extreme top of the cone, was much exposed.

The first man hit was a private of the 72nd. He was posted on the side of the kotul, overlooking the Chardeh valley. His rifle probably saved him receiving a fatal wound, for the ball injured two of his fingers, then smashed the lock of the rifle, and passed through the tip of his nose. He came round to the north side of the cone, which offered a little cover from the bullets flying about, where his wound was rapidly stitched and dressed.

About this time, within one hundred yards of the guns, at the point marked D above the dip below, a flaring red standard was suddenly popped up, and in the next minute or so several men were hit. One of Swinley's gunners was mortally wounded ; a second gunner with Montanaro received a ball in the elbow while pulling the lanyard, and two more of Swinley's gunners were wounded in the thigh, one in the ankle, which injury afterwards cost him his life.

A heavy fire was directed at Major Swinley's gun, and the rock below and to his left was riddled with bullet-marks. The gun-mule was also shot, and for limbering up, this piece was practically out of action.

The determined advance of the Afghans, almost up to our guns, rendered our position most critical ; for their vast superiority in numbers enabled them to invest our left rear and flank. Having signalled to General Baker for assistance, Colonel Clarke's action was prompt. "Where is the officer commanding this company?" called out the Colonel. "Here, sir!" was the reply from Captain Spens. Pointing to the standard in front, he received an order to take and hold the position. The enemy had simply planted the standard here, and were collecting together under cover of the gap below for a final rush, and from the cone we could not see their numbers. Drawing his sword, Spens collected a few of his men, who fixed bayonets. Away they went, the dip in the ground covering their advance. All watched with eagerness, and the little party reached the standard

untouched. From here, under the slight cover of the rocks, they commenced to fire rapidly below. Colonel Clarke now drew his sword, and collecting some men of the 5th Punjab Infantry and Guides, heading them, started them off behind Spens, and then returned to the cone, now threatened on three sides. For a few seconds Spens' party fired rapidly down towards east. Few of the enemy were visible to us. One Afghan could be seen standing up boldly with his shield, not twenty yards in front, and suddenly down he went. Now two or three of our men were beckoning towards the cone as if something was wanted. It might be ammunition, and accordingly one of three mules laden with ammunition was sent forward. Hardly had the beast proceeded twenty yards, tugging at his driver with a mulish obstinacy, when suddenly a change came over the little band holding the position at the standard, and the huge odds hurled against them slowly forced them back towards the main body. Poor Spens, unable to check this movement, like a gallant officer, was the last to retire. Hardly, in rear of all, had he moved three paces, when the leading Afghan jumped over the rocks. He was a magnificent-looking man, with dark bushy whiskers. Spens immediately turned and faced him, advanced, and raised his sword. His blade caught the Afghan fairly on the left shoulder, but either the blade was not sharp, or the man's poshteen acted as an epaulet. Slightly staggered, but without drawing back, the Afghan raised his terrible

knife, and, making no attempt to guard the thrust Spens rapidly made at his breast, he delivered home a fierce blow at Spens' left shoulder, which killed him instantly, for he fell to the ground without a movement, and in the next instant two Ghazis dressed in white sprang up over the rocks towards his fallen body. A soldier tried to bayonet one of them, but the Ghazi turned the weapon aside, and the man was compelled to retire. The leading Afghan then advanced straight on towards the guns; but either Spens' thrust had gone home, or else a bullet from the cone had avenged his death, for fifteen yards ahead the Afghan was afterwards found and recognised, his body perfectly preserved by the stones placed over it, and the intense cold. So rapid was the advance of the enemy, that it was impossible to limber up the gun on the summit of the cone, several of the gunners having been wounded. The mule carrying No. 2 gun was shot on the way down. The gunners, however, dragged the gun down, and only abandoned it at the foot of the hill. The third gun had been limbered-up one minute before, and it was removed intact. The fourth gun, under Montanaro, was less exposed on the north side. Knowing our position to be critical, he loaded for the last time. When the foremost Afghans were within eighty yards, his double charge of case was fired with deadly effect into their midst, checking their advance for a brief time, and under cover of the smoke of his gun his men rapidly limbered up, and made good their retire-

ment. The native havildar, on seeing their dangerous position, coolly said, "Draw swords ka hokum hai!" (Are we to draw swords?) The enemy on our left flank now rapidly swarmed up the hill from the plain below, while upwards of twenty horsemen madly galloped up the kotul. Their leader had hardly breasted the sky-line, waving his sword, when man and horse rolled over, before, I believe, the rifles of two signallers with Captain Stratton, who was the last officer on the hill. The enemy on the hills (H) on the right of the G-3 below now rushed forward, and it looked as if our force would be cut off. The advance of the enemy from the Chardeh side was stopped by the steady volleys of a company of the 72nd, under Lieutenant Campbell, who had been sent down part of the way from the Asmai heights, while a number of the Dograh company of the Guides, under their native officer, and some of the 5th Punjab Infantry, gamely held for a short time the brow of the hill on the Sherpur side. Under this cover our men retired to the plain below, and formed up in a ditch near the foot of the hill. Seeing our position being carried by the enemy, General Roberts detached two companies of the 3rd Sikhs, then near Deh-i-Afghani, under Major Aislabie and Lieutenant Barrett, who doubled up to our support, along the foot of the Asmai hill, and advanced with a cheer towards the hill, with the 5th Punjab Infantry; and had the order now been given to retake the position, so invigorating was the effect of that cheer, that I

believe it would have been immediately carried. The Sikhs, indeed, reached within one hundred yards of where, lying behind a big rock, one of our guns had been abandoned. The battery had then retired to Bilund Killa, and it was not known that the gun was in the position, or it would have been rescued with very little loss. The order for General Baker's force to retire to Sherpur was soon afterwards received, and the same order was flashed up to General Macpherson on the Bala Hissar hill, as well as to Colonel Jenkins' little force, who had in the morning so gallantly taken the heights then in their possession. His retirement was not to be effected without severe fighting. On gaining possession of the Conical hill the enemy made little delay, and soon advanced very determinately on the Asmai heights, which they evidently meant to assault. It was now that Colonel Jenkins received his orders. His retirement was effected in perfect order, the 72nd covering the Guides, and the Guides the 72nd, in turn. The boldness of the enemy, of course, increased tenfold when they saw we were about to retire; in checking their advance on the western end of the heights, Captain Gordon, of the 92nd, was shot through the chest, and Lieutenant Gaisford, of the 72nd, was shot through the heart, lower down. The sound of independent and volley firing after our men had abandoned the crest of the hill was quite deafening for about fifteen minutes. In spite of the enemy's fire, all our killed and wounded, who that day were

under the care of Dr. Atkins, of the 72nd, and Dr. Lewtas of the Guides, were brought in. Captain Hammond, of the Guides, proved himself a cool and brave soldier that day, by holding with a few men a knoll near the brow until all our troops had passed, and where he killed several men with his own hand; indeed, a stout heart is always required to be the last to retire before the Afghans, on account of the brutal way in which they kill all the wounded. He has since received the Victoria Cross. The distinguished bearing of Colonel Brownlow, commanding the 72nd Highlanders, and the noble way in which he led his men up the steep sides of the Koh-i-Asmai height, excited the admiration of all. His tall form, always well to the front, bore a charmed life against the many bullets directed at it. Often since I have heard the remark, if ever a man deserved the Cross that day it was Brownlow. He lived only to die a soldier's death when leading his regiment at the battle of Candahar; but, though his presence has departed, his memory is still dear to all those who knew him during life—a brave soldier and a fine gentleman.

Another force of the enemy had shown themselves from the Bin-i-Hissar direction, who now began to occupy the Bala Hissar. General Macpherson's brigade commenced its retirement under the cover of the fire of Morgan's mountain battery, two companies of the 72nd, under Lieutenant Milne, being told off for the stern duty of rear-guard, while three companies of the 72nd held the Kabul gorge. Some

baggage had to be left on the heights, owing to the want of animals to carry it, and more was lost on the perpendicular slopes of the hill towards the river. However, by 3.30 P.M. the baggage had crossed the river. The enemy seized the heights immediately our troops evacuated them. The command of the rear-guard now devolved upon Colonel Knowles, commanding the 67th. Two companies of the 67th with two of the 5th Goorkhas drove back the enemy, advancing along the road to the left of the Kabul gorge, and cleared the orchards near Deh Mazung ; they held the gorge until the brigade had got well away, and the two companies of the 72nd, under Lieutenant Milne, had descended from the heights and crossed the river. The rear-guard, 67th, 72nd, and 5th Goorkhas, now closed in behind the main body, and was pursued with a perfect hail of bullets from all the surrounding hills which were in the hands of the enemy ; but its retirement was effected with miraculously little loss, for it seldom happens that bullets fired at random hit the mark.

On reaching Deh-i-Afghani the houses protected the force from the fire. Bayonets were now fixed, and the rear-guard filed through the narrow streets of the suburb. All the killed and wounded were brought away, most of them on mules carrying the reserve ammunition.

At half-past 4, Macpherson's brigade reached the open plain to the south-west of Sherpur, and found Colonel Jenkins' force and a wing of the 92nd

Highlanders drawn up to cover their flanks, and by 5 o'clock the whole division was concentrated inside the friendly walls of Shere Ali's cantonments. So ended the 14th December 1879, a day which had commenced so brilliantly for our arms.

That the concentration of our army inside Sherpur was partly compulsory, was, perhaps, not quite pleasant to our fire-eaters ; yet the great wisdom of this step rapidly adopted cannot be doubted; and it was evident that an alternative which must have been finally necessary had only been hastened.

Had the enemy been driven back in the afternoon in his assault on the Asmai heights, after taking the cone, as no doubt he would have been, had orders been so issued to Colonel Jenkins, the occupation of the heights in force during the night would have been necessary. Had then Mahomed Jan's army again re-formed, for his reinforcements from all points of the compass seemed to be endless, and assaulted Sherpur during the night, or at daybreak next morning, with only a part of the resolution displayed by them on the 14th, then the food and ammunition of our army might have been placed in great jeopardy.

Amongst ourselves, a few of us thought that the mishap at the Conical hill was practically a fortunate if unpleasant occurrence, though to some it was a matter of regret that the order was not given first to retake the cone and bring away the guns. Had we accomplished this, and shaken the enemy, we might then have retired like a terrier overwhelmed only by

the great number of rats attacking him, and Mahomed Jan would have vainly boasted of having driven us inside his old master's cantonments, whose massive walls saved us from his grand assault. Our retirement that day fell hardest on the Guides and 72nd Highlanders, who had so gallantly stormed and completely routed the enemy on the Asmai heights in the morning.

CHAPTER XII.

Inside Sherpur from the 14th to the 24th December 1879.—Our Defences.—Our internal Arrangements.—Colonel Brownlow's Command.—The Siah Sung Hills are occupied.—The 5th Punjab Infantry take the King's Garden.—Campbell's Howitzer.—The King's Garden.—Montanaro is wounded.—Major Cook dies.—Montanaro dies.—Gorham's Mixture and Batteries.—Colonel Brownlow.—We hear of Gough's Advance.—The 12th Bengal Cavalry ride to Luttabund to assist his Advance.—The final Assault.—Its Repulse.—The Cavalry go out.—Major Hammond.—The Royal Engineers. Death of Captain Dundas, V.C., and Lieutenant Nugent.—Lieutenant Murdoch is wounded.—Buston avenges him.—The Afghans' Attack on the Southern Wall.—Our Casualties.—Effects of Stray Bullets.—Noise of Bullets.—Velocity of Rifles.—A Night's Rest at last.

ANXIETY was depicted on the faces of our bravest officers on the night of the 14th December. Our union in Sherpur meant strength, but our numbers were small: excluding sick and wounded, our fighting strength hardly reached 5,000 all told.

Our position in 1879 differed most materially from the condition of our army in 1841. Our troops were now perfectly armed, our artillery was excellent; but

important above all things, our commissariat and transport were safely stowed inside our lines, and we had plenty of food for man and beast, and, unlike 1841, we were thus able to scorn the attempts made by the enemy to treat with us. On reaching Kabul in 1879, the two points which caused General Roberts the greatest anxiety were—

- (1) The best position to occupy.
- (2) How to collect sufficient food and forage before winter set in.

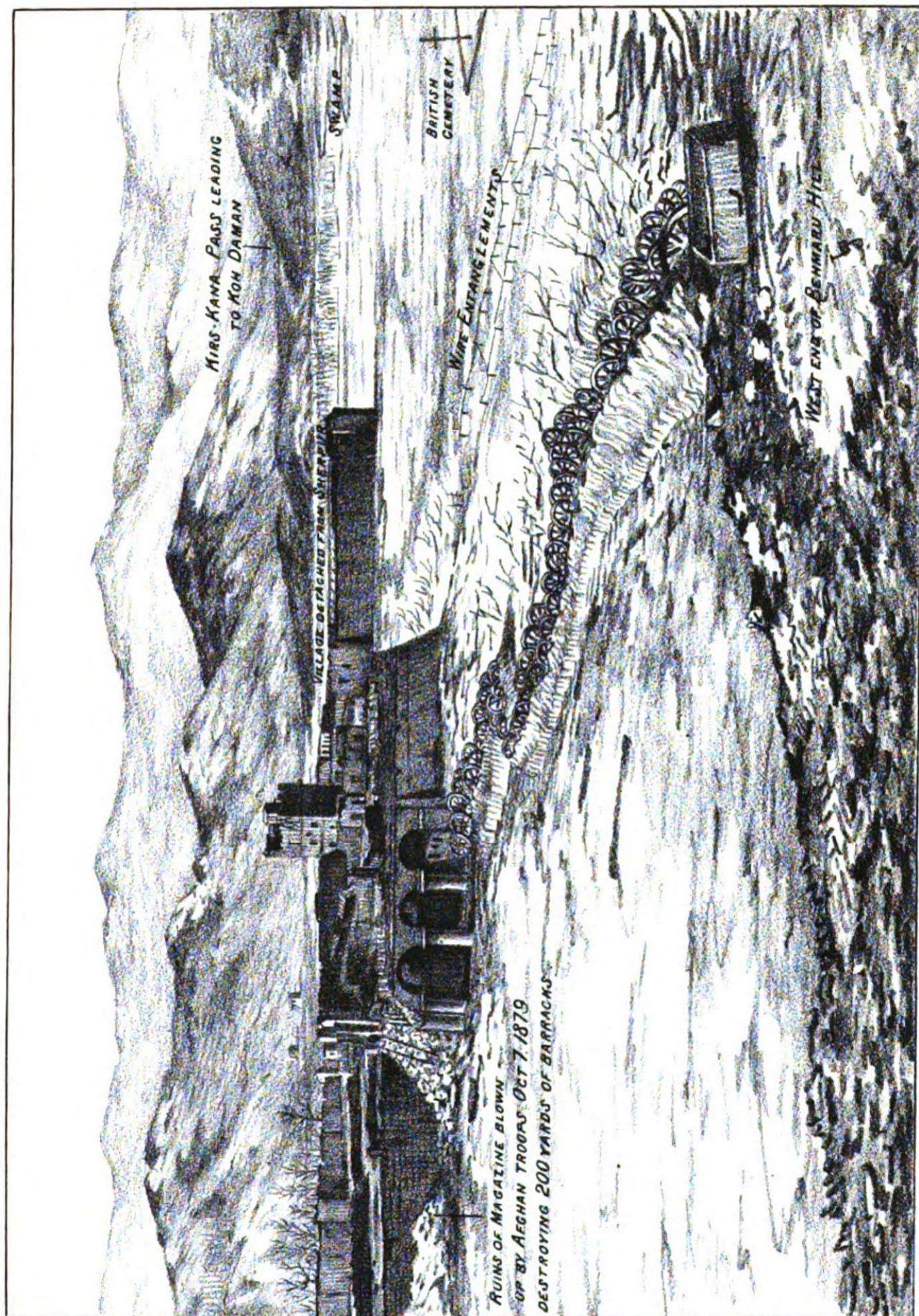
The neighbourhood of the Bala Hissar was carefully examined, and for many reasons it was desirable to hold this fortress ; but no place except Sherpur offered a certain amount of shelter and sufficient space for the whole of the troops. Sherpur, on the other hand,—built originally to hold the whole of Shere Ali's army—was much more extended than our small force either required or could defend. The General determined not only to keep his troops together, but to have all his stores and ammunition in one place. The bitter Afghan winter was close at hand, and snow had been known to fall at Kabul in November, so that the greatest exertion was necessary to get in enough food for man and beast. Our daily consumption was very considerable and every animal had to be employed in bringing in grain and forage.

This prevented many important works being carried out, such as housing the troops and strengthening the defences.

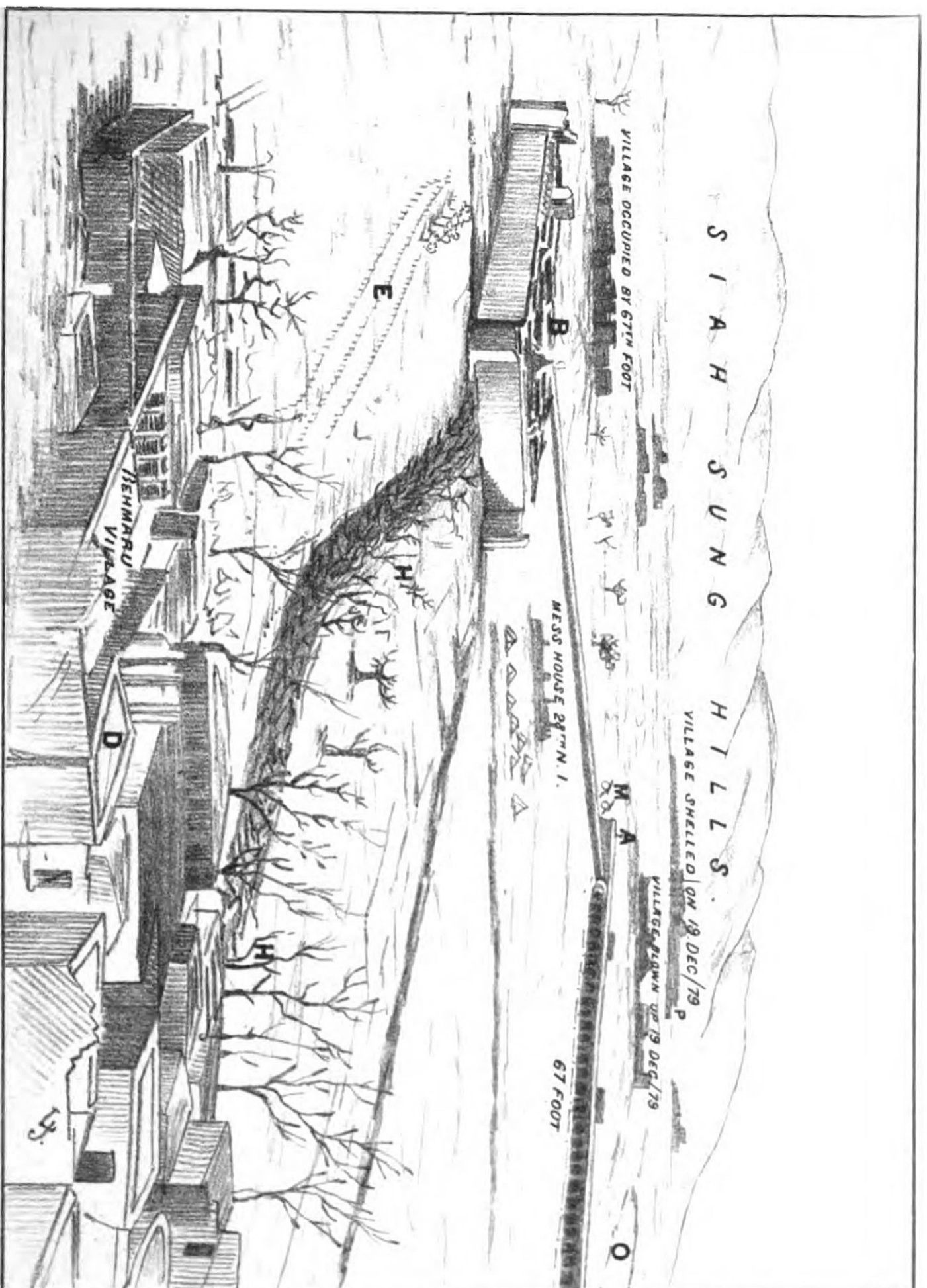
The General had received many warnings that we

should not be left in peace during the winter, and several Afghans declared that once the severe weather set in, it would be impossible to collect food or forage. So successfully was the collection carried out, that by the beginning of December we had stored four months' grain for men and animals, and six weeks' forage, besides an ample supply of ammunition and medicines. The General's mind was thus relieved of the terrible anxiety which must have weighed down Elphinstone as the winter of 1841 surrounded his starving army. However hard his little force might be pressed, and however long his communications with India interrupted, he felt sure of being able to hold his own.

General Roberts' interesting connection with Kabul is not generally known, and he seems certainly to have inherited or profited by the experience and soldierly instinct of his father who served at Kabul during the first Afghan War, first as a Lieutenant Colonel commanding the Bengal European Regiment (present 1st Battalion Royal Munster Fusiliers), and afterwards as Brigadier Roberts in command of Shah Soojah's Contingent. He repeatedly warned Sir W. Macnaughten of the necessity of rendering their position at Kabul secure ; of the danger of scattering troops in small detachments over the country, and of placing the treasure and commissariat stores outside the British entrenchment. No heed was paid to him, and after one or two letters had passed between him and Lord Auckland on the subject, and after satisfying himself that Sir William Macnaughten would not be



SKETCH OF NORTH-WEST CORNER OF SHERPIT CAMPMENT DEC 1870



A S.E. corner bastion. F.A., R.H.A., and Mountain guns shelled village **P** from here.

B Native Field Hospital. From **A** to **B** wall was very low and incomplete.

D Village of Behmaru, completely enveloped **E**, held by "Corps of Guides."

H Barrier of trees and ditch between village and Field Hospital. 6,000 Afghans told off to attack line **B** to **D**, Dec. 23, 1879.

I Obstructions of telegraph wire.

K Spot outside bastion where Lt. Montanaro, R.A., was mortally wounded, Dec. 19, 1879

O Part of site of Cantonments, 1841.

THE NORTH-EAST CORNER AND EAST SIDE OF SHERPUR.

advised, he resigned his command and returned to India. His life was thus saved, and he was spared witnessing a disaster which he alone, apparently, of all in authority in Afghanistan, saw was inevitable.

The weak points in our defence, as has been before shown, were chiefly in the northern and north-eastern sides of cantonments. Ever since the 11th December, the troops left for its defence had been hard at work strengthening these points. The village of Behmaru, held by the Guides, was rapidly fortified, and its walls loop-holed, while the fire from the roofs of the houses completely swept the weak and open line between it and the field hospital. This gap was hurriedly filled with trees and logs obtained from the neighbouring orchards. The Native field hospital at the other end of this gap was strongly occupied, its parapet loop-holed and sand-bagged. This, however, always remained the weak point of our defence, and the Afghans were well aware of it. The open gap behind the 5th Punjab Infantry lines had been closed with gun-carriages, with a ditch around, and entanglements beyond of telegraph wire and trees. The main entrances were blocked with gun-carriages and wheels, and outside with branches of trees.

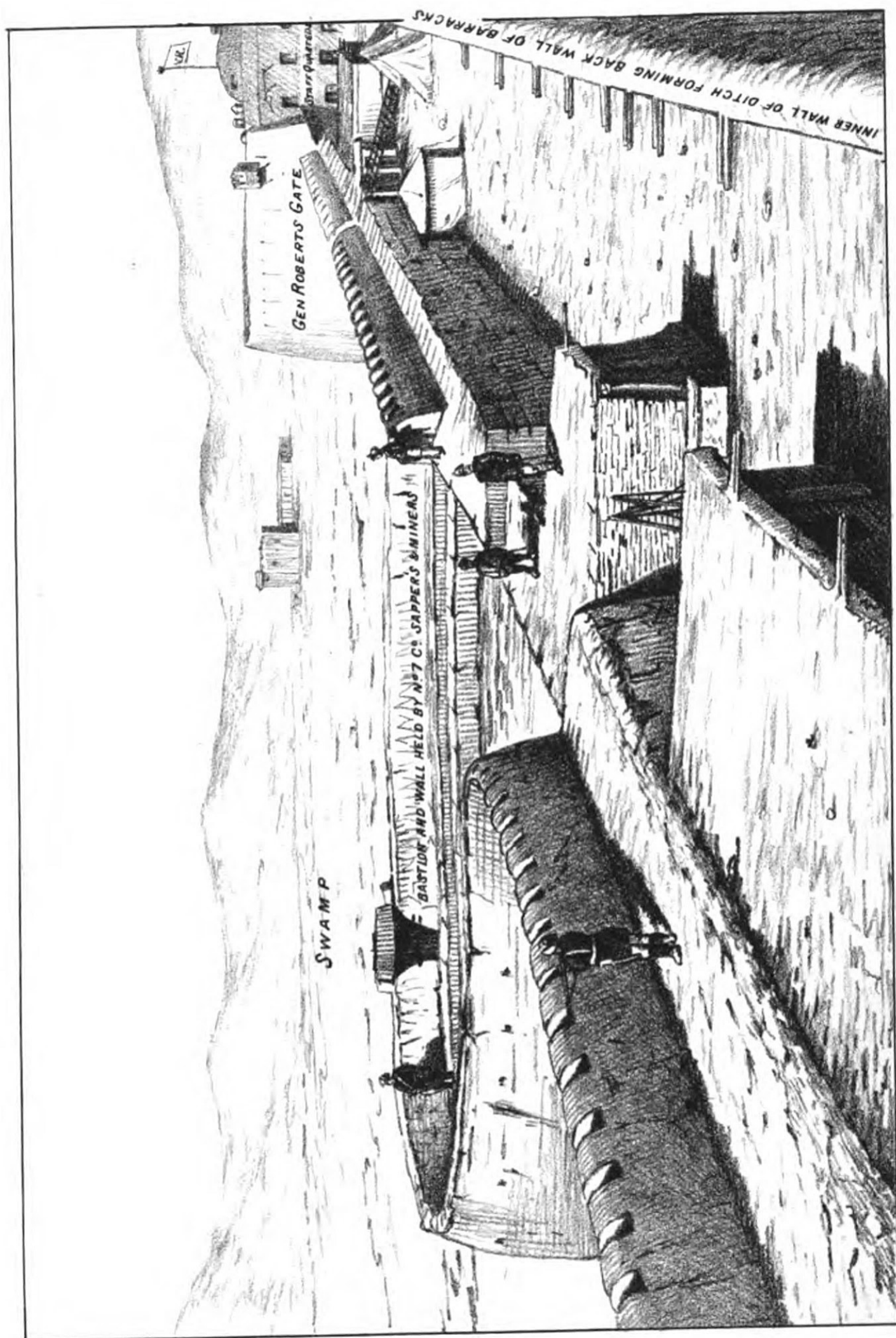
Various lines of command were told off in case of attack. General Hills commanded from the General's gateway to Behmaru gap; General Hugh Gough, from the gap to the village; Colonel Jenkins, from the Behmaru village to the field hospital; General Macpherson, from the field hospital to the 72nd

gateway ; Colonel Brownlow, from the 72nd gateway to the south-west bastion ; Colonel Hogg from the south-west bastion to the General's gateway. General Baker commanded the reserve formed of portions of the three European regiments. During the night the 12th Bengal Cavalry and a small detachment of infantry holding Budkhak on the Khyber road were recalled, and arrived safely. Colonel Hudson, commanding at Luttabund, was directed to hold that post at all risks until the arrival of General Charles Gough's brigade, which had been urgently sent for.

The Luttabund Post was most important strategically. The position was commanding, and served as a link between Kabul and Jugdullak, which was occupied by a small force under Colonel Frank Norman. With Luttabund in his possession General Roberts felt confident that Brigadier Charles Gough's advance would not be seriously opposed ; and he was satisfied that Colonel Hudson's little force would hold their own as long as their provisions lasted.

The night of the 14th, however, passed quietly. During the 15th, beyond sending out cavalry patrols, all troops that could be spared were employed in strengthening our defences.

The Afghans were unwisely resting on their laurels ; some were engaged in looting the city, others were clearing the Bala Hissar of the powder in the magazine, and many were enjoying themselves. They probably thought we were caught in a trap, and that, as in 1841, our total destruction was only a matter of



SKETCH OF DITCH, OUTER WALL, AND BASTION, SHERPUR CANTONMENT.

time. The night of the 15th passed quietly, and by the evening of the 16th our lines had become so greatly strengthened, and were so ready for an attack, that any assault on their part could only have ended disastrously. The Afghan guns were made free use of, and placed in positions sweeping all weak points and approaches.

A telegraph line was constructed, connecting the General's gateway with the field hospital at the other end of Sherpur, and with intervening points. This field telegraph was of great use, as, owing to the dense fogs which often prevailed during the time of our investment, both flag and heliograph were sometimes quite useless.

During the siege my point of observation was from the west end of the southern wall, under Colonel Brownlow's command. The line of wall, about 400 yards long, included two bastions as well as the bastion at the extreme south-west corner. It was guarded by the 72nd Highlanders and two guns of Swinley's battery. An eighteen-pounder was afterwards mounted in the bastion with our two guns. One of the captured eight-inch howitzers, with two of the Amir's mountain guns, defended the corner bastion, under the command of Captain Campbell, R.A.

Our position overlooked the King's garden, the remains of the Shah Bagh of 1841, Deh-i-Afghani and the suburbs of Kabul, as well as the Asmai heights. Of course we could see nothing of the events occurring on the north or north-east sides,

On the 17th December the enemy at last appeared to be rousing themselves, and showed in force, with a large display of standards, on the Siah Sung hills, in a crow line about 2,000 yards from the east end of Sherpur.

Some horse and field artillery were then sent out from the eastern gateway, and made most beautiful practice on the masses assembled on the hills, clearing the hill-side rapidly of both enemy and standards, the Afghans rushing down the hill-side towards Sherpur. The rapid disappearance of the enemy caused much merriment in our bastion. Viewed, however, through glasses, it seemed as if the Afghans were well in hand, and that they were rushing on towards the guns which were dealing so handsomely amongst them. Some months afterwards, when talking at mess of the enemy's tendency to rush guns, a cavalry officer on duty that day with our artillery escort declared that on this occasion the Afghans came down the hill straight at the guns, which, being on the Sherpur side of the Kabul river, were withdrawn at leisure. Campbell's howitzer commenced to fire this day towards Deh-i-Afghani and the Asmai height. Some delay had been experienced in fitting fuses to the shells. The loud report of this piece, when it did explode, though it was only allowed to be fired at lengthened intervals of half an hour or more, generally drew a rush of heads to the wall to watch the result of the shell, which could be seen whizzing through the air and

then bursting with a second loud report. This howitzer was, however, a little uncertain in its action, some shells bursting unpleasantly near the muzzle, and some at 600 yards distant.

During the afternoon part of the 5th Punjab Infantry, under Major Pratt, accompanied by Colonel Brownlow, marched out and drove the enemy from the King's garden, from the cover of which they had been annoying our bastions. The 5th Punjab Infantry returned at sunset with only one man wounded.

December 18th.—In the morning the Afghans were again on the alert, and showed in considerable force on the slopes of Asmai, above Deh-i-Afghani, shouting and waving standards. After a long harangue on the part of their leaders, and a blessing from Mushk-i-Alam, with one long and loud shout they rushed down the side of the hill towards Sherpur, and were lost to view in the surrounding gardens. An attack was evidently contemplated on our position. Numbers of Afghans were seen breaking cover, and the walls facing the south-west bastion were soon lined with heads, and a useless fire was opened on our defences. Several hundred men rushed forward and gained the cover of the broken walls, about 600 yards on our right. A few of the Afghan cavalry also galloped under the Asmai heights, threatening our cavalry pickets on the rising ground of Bilund Killa.

On this, as on several other occasions, the first vigorous rush which the Afghans made after the shout really looked like business, owing to its im-

petuosity. A few hundred yards' run then seemed to let off the superfluous courage of the majority, who never seemed to gain their second wind, and only a few of the braver spirits, whom we denominated Ghazis, kept well to the front. Beyond keeping us on the *qui vive* the Afghans, however, gained no advantage; for they had then no scaling-ladders, and to have attempted to run on walls more than twelve feet high was simply madness.

About mid-day the sun shot out through the cold leaden sky around, for a short time, and we all viewed with pleasure the Luttabund heliograph, twenty-one miles distant, flashing away rapidly. A sufficient light lasted to send and receive a short message. Another pleasing sight that day was the wonderful success which followed a ricochet shot fired from Captain Campbell's howitzer.

The enemy collected on the lowest slopes of the Asmai hill, above the city, were being shelled by our artillery, outside the General's gateway, and so accurate was our fire that a number retreated and collected in a deep hollow on the eastern face of the hill, out of sight of the guns, but visible to some of us who were watching the effects of the fire from our bastion. Campbell was now occasionally firing his howitzer towards Deh-i-Afghani, and what a lot we felt we would give if only one of his shells would burst inside that hollow. Almost immediately afterwards bang went the howitzer, and in a few seconds we saw the shell strike the ground at least 600 yards short of the

hill. "Bah!" we exclaim, "what a bad shot!" when lo! a deafening report is heard from the hill, and the hollow was seen suddenly filled with smoke. That was a marvellous ricochet, the shell pitched next right in the hollow and then burst. It caused considerable consternation amongst the Afghans, as it most certainly appeared to them to have come round a corner, and with our glasses we could see men rushing about and evidently dragging away wounded. After the siege was over, a carpenter working for me, who lived in Deh-i-Afghani, told me that eight men had been killed in this hollow by a shell.

In the afternoon, to show our indifference for the enemy, four companies of the 67th Foot, under Major Baker, skirmished out on the west side of Sherpur.

The King's garden had been occupied in the morning by the 5th Punjab Infantry, under Lieutenant Mein, and came under a smart fire when returning in the evening. Their retirement was covered by two companies of the 3rd Sikhs, under Major Aislabie, who lined the walls outside the 72nd gateway; while occupying the garden, they had lost one man. As our troops left by the northern entrances, the enemy rushed in at the southern, and with angry shouts expressed their annoyance at our boldness in occupying this garden in the face of their thousands, and shortly afterwards the quarters and boosah* belonging

* Boosah, chopped straw.

to the 5th Punjab Cavalry were set fire to. The night being very dark, the burning boosah and wood lighted up for many hours the south-west corner of Sherpur, and thus helped to relieve the anxiety of the sentries. During the night snow fell, and added much to the general discomfort, as nearly the whole force were obliged to sleep at their posts. Previous to this the water-supply of Sherpur had been cut off by diverting the water-channels. As, however, water was found within five feet of the surface, wells were rapidly dug, and, beyond the delay caused by watering animals at a well, little inconvenience was felt.

December 19th.—The enemy having occupied two forts near the south-east corner of Sherpur, and between it and the river, from which they caused us some annoyance by their fire, General Roberts determined to drive them out, and blow up the nearest village, which was about 500 yards distant. General Baker was directed to execute the movement with the 67th Foot, 3rd Sikhs, 5th Punjab Cavalry, and two of Swinley's mountain guns, and a company of Sappers and Miners, under Lieutenants Nugent and Buston. That morning a dense white mist covered the ground, and one could only see a few hundred yards ahead. The force moved out early by field hospital gateway, on the eastern side, then turned southwards, and the guns were drawn up close under the east corner bastion behind the skirmishers of the 3rd Sikhs. The officers were standing by the guns, and the General and his staff close by, when suddenly the fog lifted in

obedience to the passing wind, and discovered the battery to the enemy, who were lining the ditches in close proximity, emboldened by the cover afforded by the fog. A volley was immediately directed at the battery, the bullets cutting up the ground freely. Several of the 3rd Sikhs, six in all, were hit, and Lieutenant Montanaro, of the battery, fell mortally wounded; though terribly hurt, he retained his presence of mind, and gave the order, "Run the gun back!" The guns immediately came into action, and fired several rounds, the Afghans retiring as our skirmishers advanced. The force then took cover under a village and garden close to our eastern wall.

The enemy having been driven back, the guns were withdrawn to south-east corner bastion, with the view of shelling a large village some 1,200 yards distant, near the Kabul river. Under cover of the fire, the 67th advanced in skirmishing order towards the nearest village, and, finding it unoccupied, the Sappers proceeded to mine it. Presently, Lieutenant Nugent appeared, and, warning back the 67th, all retired towards the Sherpur wall. Two or three explosions soon followed in rapid succession, and as the dense smoke cleared away, the towers and chief part of the village were seen a crumbled ruin. The solemn silence which preceded the explosion as our men retired, followed by the subsequent noise, smoke, and bricks flying in the air, must, I imagine, have deeply impressed the Afghans, for they could never be quite

certain as to what devilry we might not be up to next. A wholesome dread of our telegraph-wire entanglements imbued their minds, as they considered we were able to explode them by electricity. Either this or the dread of our cavalry catching them on the plains influenced them, for they never once made an attempt on our north-west and northern sides.

The village now to be shelled was about 1,000 to 1,200 yards distant ; the walls were exceedingly high, thick, and massive below, but thin above. Attached to this village was a large garden with a ditch in front, from the cover of which, as well as from loop-holes cut near the bottom of the wall, the enemy continued their fire. As the calibre of the mountain-guns was too small to produce effective results after several rounds had been fired, four horse-artillery guns were sent for. The mountain-guns were withdrawn, and F-A Royal Horse Artillery galloped up into the bastion, and soon commenced on the village. Their practice was most accurate, and played considerable havoc with the upper and thinner walls. An attempt was then made to pitch a shell from above into the centre of the village. A mountain-gun was placed on the level plain behind and below the bastion. A long stick was then fixed in the ground in front of it, and the muzzle of the gun, pointed in the direction of the village, was then raised to bring the sight in a line with the top of the wall and the stick. All who had glasses ran to the wall to watch the effect. The lanyard was pulled—but where that

shell went, I think, no one ever knew. It not improbably killed some Afghans at a great distance, who little thought that our ammunition reached so far. The enemy's fire having been checked in this direction, the whole force was withdrawn about 2 o'clock. That evening Brevet-Major John Cook, V.C., died from the effects of his wound received on the 12th December, mortification having previously set in.

His untimely death called forth the following Division Order from General Roberts:—

“It is with deep regret the Lieutenant-General announces to the Kabul Field Force the death, from a wound received on the 12th December 1879, of Major John Cook, V.C., 5th Goorkhas. While yet a young officer, Major Cook served at Umbeylah in 1863, where he distinguished himself, and in the Black Mountain campaign in 1868. Joining the Kuram Force on its formation, Major Cook was present at the capture of the Peiwar Kotul, his conduct on that occasion earning for him the admiration of the whole force and the Victoria Cross. On the return, in the Monghyr pass, he again brought himself prominently to notice by his cool and gallant bearing. In the capture of the heights at Sang-i-Nawishta Major Cook again distinguished himself, and in the attack on the Takt-i-Shah peak, on the 12th December, he ended a noble career in a manner worthy even of his great name for bravery. By Major Cook's death Her Majesty has lost the services of an officer who

would, had he been spared, have risen to the highest honours of his profession, and Sir F. Roberts feels sure that the whole Cabul Field Force will share in the pain his loss has occasioned him."

December 20th.—With a view of retaliating on the enemy who occupied Mahomed Sheriff's fort on the city road, two 18-pounders and a howitzer were mounted on the bastions east of the 72nd gateway, and placed under Major Gorham, R.A., the judge advocate to the force. That evening Lieutenant Montanaro died. The paralysis from which he suffered extended upwards, and he expired at 7 o'clock, meeting his death bravely. With his usual kindness and consideration, General Roberts, who had been going round the field hospitals, came in to see him, and his visit helped to cheer up the poor dying fellow. There was a melancholy sadness in attending the funerals of officers buried during the siege. Volleys were not fired over the graves. The enemy on these occasions never attempted to molest us in any way.

On the next day, December 21st, Major Gorham, R.A., opened fire with his big guns. The mixture prepared for his battery was composed of small cannon-balls, bullets, and bits of telegraph wire, and was known as "Gorham's Mixture." After Mahomed Sheriff's fort had been vigorously peppered for some hours, the enemy's fire quite ceased. Major Hanna, of the Quartermaster-General's Department, was therefore despatched with some companies of the

5th Punjab Infantry to ascertain if the building was as empty as it appeared to be. The Afghans, however, had no intention of abandoning a position that commanded the high road to both the Bala Hissar and the city. Major Hanna on this occasion displayed gallantry and coolness. Not wishing to expose his escort more than necessary, he left them at some distance behind and walked up towards the Fort by himself. The Afghans kept quiet until he was well within range, when they opened on him a heavy fire under which he coolly walked back, fortunately unhurt, to his men. During this and the succeeding days, the enemy coolly marched between the King's garden and Deh-i-Afghani, dragging away beams and spars. These, as our spies informed us, were being rapidly converted into scaling-ladders for the day of the grand assault to be made on our position. The spies must have passed a somewhat risky time. The Afghan General, in his pride at having caused our temporary imprisonment, in having proclaimed Musa Jan, Yakooab Khan's son, Amir, arrogantly offered terms of surrender, and now probably cared little about our hearing of his actions. The news brought in by the spies was generally correct. I once watched one of these men approaching the 72nd gateway. His advance across the open was made hesitatingly and cautiously, as if uncertain of the welcome awaiting him, and, as he had no white flag, he certainly ran some risk from the rifle of a sentry who had not been previously warned. Finding at

first that his passage was unmolested, he advanced boldly up to the gateway, and, after some parley, was admitted by the officer in charge and conveyed under a guard to the General's quarters. The wood-carriers were occasionally treated to a volley from some picked shots of the 72nd. On one occasion Colonel Brownlow happened to be present when an order was thus given. The men selected came to the parapet and prepared their rifles; one of them, as he brought the rifle to the present, either through carelessness or nervousness, pulled the trigger, and the rifle was discharged by itself before the others were ready. Colonel Brownlow immediately reprimanded him: "Go away, sir, go away! we don't want jumpy men here;" and the soldier, looking really unhappy, had to march out of the bastion and take up his position further down the wall where firing was not allowed. The stern and quiet manner in which this rebuke was administered made the punishment a severe one, while at the same time it put every man on his mettle; indeed, in times of difficulty or danger few men have surpassed the dignified coolness and bravery—peculiarly inspiring to those around—exhibited on all occasions by the gallant Colonel of the 72nd.

During the afternoon the 5th Goorkhas, part of 3rd Sikhs and 5th Punjab Infantry, under General Hill's command, proceeded out through the western gateway towards the Bilund Killa, their object being to show our teeth to the enemy. They returned at dusk.

Further news of the near approach of General Charles Gough's brigade now reached Kabul, and a cavalry regiment was ordered out to assist their advance and show them the road. This difficult and dangerous task fell to the lot of the 12th Bengal Cavalry, commanded by Major Green. Leaving Sherpur between 3 and 4 in the morning, in darkness and intense cold, they made the best of their way across country between Sherpur and the Siah Sung hills, having to ford the Kabul river. After a terrible journey, men and horses falling frequently in the snow and ice, and in the many ditches intersecting the country, some of them very difficult to manœuvre even in daylight, they at last reached Budkhak. This post was found to be held by the enemy, and Major Green was compelled to take his regiment into Luttabund, which was reached before the arrival of Gough's brigade. This night-march of the cavalry was certainly the most hazardous and difficult task performed by our troops during the siege of Sherpur. We afterwards heard that the Afghans believed this regiment formed the escort of our big swells who were flying to India for safety. If such were the case, the final attack on Sherpur may have been hastened.

The 22nd December passed in a comparatively quiet and ominous manner. Towards the afternoon the enemy were seen collecting in the villages east and south-east of Sherpur, our weak side. Late in the afternoon news was brought in by the spies that a grand

attack was to be made at dawn, on all sides of Sherpur. The signal for this attack would be a great fire lighted on the eastern slope of the Asmai hill, which was to be fed with oil at the hands of the high priest, Mushk-i-Alam. This news reached our bastion after dark, when we were sitting round talking about the expected attack, and it was really a relief to know that something was about to occur.

The night passed in perfect quiet, and the sentries could distinctly hear the scaling-ladders being dragged along the crisp, frozen snow to the King's garden, ready for the morning's assault. That night I shared a tent with another officer, in the ditch at the foot of the bastion where the guns were ready.

December 23rd.—A gunner came down and called us in the dark. On reaching the bastion hardly a sound, beyond the men talking in whispers, was audible, and all eyes were turned on the slope of the Asmai heights, on which a bright fire was burning, flaring up and casting its reflection almost down to our position, as it was fed occasionally by oil, or ghi. The air was bitterly cold, the time being just before dawn, with the faintest glimmer of light. It was really quite a pleasure to see the signal-fire. So far the news was true, and now or never for the attack ! Almost immediately afterwards a rifle-shot rang out in the great stillness from the direction of Deh-i-Afghani, then another from the King's garden, followed up by solitary shots from the villages on the south-east and eastern flanks. The signal for the

attack had gone forth, and as the last shot rang out a faint glimmer of daylight appeared.

The enemy now opened a rapid fire from the King's garden and against nearly all the southern line, and small bodies of men with huge ladders broke from the cover of the garden, and made for the broken walls opposite the wall held by the cavalry with their carbines, and Major Gorham's howitzers. Our troops replied to the fire, and the mountain-guns pitched some shells into the garden. Only one of the enemy's ladders reached a broken wall about 400 yards in front of our lines. The fire of our carbines and of the howitzers could not be faced. It was impossible for men to live on the open ground beyond our parapets, much less to approach them.

The events just described took place within a few minutes. The enemy were only drawing our attention in this direction without causing much anxiety. But now on the east flank of Sherpur, in the direction of the Native field hospital, our weakest point, arose a mighty shout, which merged into a terrific roar, as if the devils had suddenly been let loose. This roar was followed by the deafening rattle of musketry.

The main point of the Afghans' attack was now plain. This rattle of musketry, mingled with shouting, rolling backwards and forwards in mighty waves between the Behmaru village and the field hospital, was really the most terrific noise I have ever heard. It lasted at least fifteen minutes, and

then slowly subsided. From our bastion, nearly three quarters of a mile distant, it sounded as if the troops in this line were having a desperately close struggle, and that the safety of Sherpur hung on their hands; and it was easy to picture to oneself the Ghazi rushing on our defences and the tree barriers, and our fire mowing them down by hundreds, or our soldiers repelling them with the bayonet. Such, however, was not quite the case. This astounding noise was heard by the Afghans in our front, and they responded with howls (for neither of us knew how the day had gone in the east quarters), and many rushed forward with their standards. One huge standard was born bravely along for many yards, in spite of the heavy fire directed at the bearers, and had all but gained the cover of a broken wall when it went down with the usual suddenness.

The enemy, whose plan of attack was now clearly developed, had failed in their attack on all points. Their intention had been to endeavour to rapidly rush on the Behmaru village, and the space intervening between it and the Native field hospital; here hardly more than a barrier of trees opposed their advance, and they had some real chance of success at this point. Though viewed from the outside this gap appeared to the Afghans to be our weakest point, on account of the lowness and shallowness of the barrier, it was not so in reality; for the open space in front could be swept by a terribly hot flanking

fire from the Behmaru village on one side and the Field Hospital on the other, as actually did happen. The Behmaru line of hills are said to have been the dangerous part of our line. Having once reached this position, then the assault in front with ladders would have been really attempted. Information gathered from conversations with the people after peace had been settled, shows that five or six thousand men belonging to Koh Daman and Kohistan had been told off for the attack; first, because the Afghans knew it to be the weakest point of our position, and in case of their defeat the Kohistanis would be on the line of their retreat; secondly, because they believed that only one regiment was told off for the defence of this part. The reason for the assault not having been made at night was their belief that it was the custom of our army to keep a very strict look-out at night, and that our soldiers were allowed to sleep at dawn.

The reason why the attack had not been delivered before was, that, with their army daily swelling with fresh arrivals from all parts of the country, they hoped that, as at first, we might be persuaded to attack them in the open, and then, with their enormous numbers, our force might be surrounded before it could return, or else be cut in half and then destroyed piecemeal.

On finding that we were at last acting with much caution, as day after day passed without our attacking them, they began to fear that we were waiting to

catch them between our two forces, for they well knew that relief was coming from India.

As the Afghans formed up to the east of Behmaru that morning for the onset, they firmly believed in their being able to rush the defences here. Immediately, however, that they broke cover, more than a thousand yards distant, with loud shouts and beating their drums—their masses being hardly discernible to our men in the grey dawn—so terrific and rapid a fire was opened on them, as to lead them to believe that instead of having to fight one regiment several regiments had been concentrated to oppose them. This fact much disheartened them, and after advancing a few hundred yards, unable to face the storm of bullets, the main attack broke down; of course a few of the stouter hearts came on, and four men actually reached the abattis under the field hospital, where, being unsupported, they found they had attained a position honourable to themselves but hazardous to life. One Afghan turned to flee, but was shot down, and the other three attempted to hide themselves in the brushwood, where they were bayoneted by the Guides. A second attempt was indeed made by the Afghans to rally themselves, but it soon completely fell through.

Nearly all our cavalry, with G-3 Royal Artillery, now turned out of Sherpur by the Behmaru gorge and through the village, and killed all the Afghans they were able to lay their hands on—the 5th Punjab Cavalry especially distinguishing itself in accounting

for the enemy—and corpses strewed the ground very fairly for upwards of half a mile or more on the line of retreat towards Kohistan.

The cavalry scoured the country east and south-east of Sherpur, right up to the top of Siah Sung hills. Near the base of these hills Major Hammond, of the 5th Punjab Cavalry, seeing a man of some importance, who had been leading the infantry, endeavouring to escape, rode after him and slowly caught him up. The Afghan took to some heavy ground. By avoiding this and making a longer detour over sounder soil, the Afghan was overhauled, and, having deprived him of life, Major Hammond pursued his horse, which he caught, and brought back to camp. The next day the two sons of this man came into camp and respectfully made their salaams.

In rear of the cavalry followed the Sappers and Miners, accompanied by Colonel Ænæas Perkins commanding the Royal Engineers, who advanced towards Siah Sung with orders to blow up some villages on the line of route to be taken by General Charles Gough's brigade on the morrow. In doing this a deplorable accident occurred by which two distinguished and popular engineer officers lost their lives. The powder having been laid under a tower in one of the villages, the men retired, Captain Dundas, V.C., and Lieutenant Nugent, R.E., remaining behind to light the fuse. It is presumed that the fuse was faulty and exploded before the

officers had time to escape, for they were found buried beneath the ruins immediately after the explosion had taken place. Lieutenant Murdoch, R.E., engaged in the same duties, had a narrow escape during the day. While groping his way into a room, three Afghans, hidden in the darkness, fired at him, one ball only, fortunately, passing through the fleshy part of his shoulder ; his wound was promptly avenged by a brother officer, Lieutenant Buston, R.E., who quietly placed a bag of powder with a fuse attached outside the door, and the Afghans inside saw daylight no more.

Although the enemy was completely dispersed on our east flanks, they stubbornly held on their attack against our southern wall especially at the western end, where much cover was afforded them by broken-down walls and gardens. Here, behind the wall of a garden, within two hundred and fifty yards of the bastion, three standards were planted, which were flaunted before us the whole day. The enemy loop-holed the side of this wall, and posted in it such true marksmen that it was very risky showing one's head over the parapet. Several Afghans exposed their persons most boldly in the open that day, and certainly deserved the charmed life they seemed to bear. Indeed, during the whole of the day a fire was directed against our wall, which suddenly increased near dusk, and was made to cover the Afghans who were retiring in all directions. At 3 o'clock in the afternoon, word was passed along

our line of the arrival of General Charles Gough's brigade at Budkhak. The enemy were also aware of this, and knew that now it was all up with them.

Our casualty list that day amounted only to five killed and thirty-five wounded.

General Hugh Gough on the Behmaru hill had been rolled over by a spent ball, which struck him on the neck, but was arrested by the folds of a thick comforter he was wearing, and he continued at his post. Lieutenant Gambier, 5th Punjab Cavalry, was severely wounded, under the Siah Sung hills. Two companies of the 92nd lying in reserve in the middle of Sherpur, behind the Behmaru gap, were very unfortunate; though out of sight of the enemy, some of the many hundred bullets flying over the parapet reached them. One Highlander, standing warming himself by the fire, was killed, and five were wounded.

The Afghans evidently believed in the curse followed by a bullet, for more than once I saw them walk out and fire their rifles in the air in the direction of Sherpur. The mess-house of the 3rd Sikhs, built in an exposed position on the Behmaru hill, was marked with bullets; and the walls of the house occupied by Dr. Robertson, in charge of the ambulance corps, near the middle of the cantonments, afforded quite a quaint collection of balls. Several camp-followers, mules, and horses were struck and killed by chance bullets. One native gunner was curiously killed this day in our bastion: he was

sitting on the ground by the gun ammunition, near the centre, apparently quite safe, when he was struck by a ball which came over the wall or through the embrasure, and, piercing the upper part of the skull, lodged in the brain. During the siege behind the parapets two other facts were remarkable; one the sound caused by the different missiles flying through the air: some passed close to one's head with a rush, and went with a regular crash through the barrack wall behind; others passed with quite a soft musical sound; while some were audible a long way off, coming up slowly as if making an effort to complete their journey. The other fact clearly observed was the difference in the speed of the Martini-Henry and Snider bullets, the Snider coming up quite slowly in comparison with the Martini-Henry. This fact the enemy soon found out, and they owned that the European soldier's rifle was too quick for them. At 600 yards off, when the enemy were firing Sniders at the parapet, on seeing the puff of smoke, plenty of time was available for lowering the head before the bullet whizzed by, but it would have been risky to have exposed oneself in the face of a Martini-Henry.

The opportunity of further observing these facts was drawing to a close, and as the short daylight of the 23rd December rapidly waned, the enemy disappeared, and silence reigned around. That night, the enemy having been routed, the sentry duty was cut down to a safe minimum, and all not on duty turned

in for a well-earned sleep, regretting that only rum and water, and in many messes only water, was the beverage in which to drink the day's success before retiring. So ended the memorable 23rd December 1879.

CHAPTER XIII.

After the Siege.—Siah Sung is occupied.—Arrival of Gough's Brigade.—The Hindoo Merchants.—The Afghan Prisoner.—Snow falls.—Mahomed Jan's Tactics.—Christmas Day, 1879.—Outside.—The Scaling-ladders.—Kabul City.—Fortification of Sherpur and surrounding Heights.—We give them to the Afghans for nothing.—Sport in the cold Weather.—Skating.—Death of an Artilleryman.—Kabul Yachting.—Government Policy.—General Donald Stewart marches from Candahar to Kabul.—Durbar in Sherpur.—Captain Hon. Charles Dutton reconnoitres.—He is ambuscaded.—A wounded Sowar.—Shot to Death.—The Afghan Turtle.—General Stewart's Heliogram.—Shekhabad.—Camel-men.—The Hills around Shekhabad.—The Fight.—Second Fight at Charasiab.—Brigadier Baker's Brigade goes out.—Wardak Tungi.—Roostum Khel.—Kabul River.—Cavalry are taken in.—Summer in Sherpur.—Dust.—Brigadier Gough's Brigade goes out.—Koh-i-Daman.—Pughman Valley.—Mir Butcha.—Istalif.—Abdur Rahman.

DECEMBER 24TH.—On the following morning it was soon noised abroad that the Afghan army had bolted, and that during the night the many thousands collected to drive us out of the country had melted imperceptibly away. General Charles Gough's brigade was expected that day to march to Sherpur from

Budkhak, taking the road on the north side of the Siah Sung hills.

In case any attempt might be made on his left flank, a brigade of infantry was sent out to hold the Siah Sung hills, and the 67th Foot occupied the villages on the route he was to follow between Siah Sung and Sherpur, along which the line of road had been quickly and roughly marked out, and a few of the numerous ditches were bridged. A thick mist enveloped Siah Sung as the brigade approached. The Guides took the northern, and the 3rd Sikhs and mountain guns skirmished up the western end. On the summit of the hill the 3rd Sikhs found a young man armed with a sword and a bayonet on a stick, who was pounced upon in the fog and made prisoner. Otherwise the hills were quite deserted. The villages on the right and left of the main road to the city having been searched, were held by the 72nd and 5th Punjab Infantry, and a guard of the latter escorted the former governor of the city, General Hills, to his old judgment-hall.

As the wind lifted the fog from Siah Sung, we obtained a good view of the city and Bala Hissar close by, and the surrounding country, which was silent and almost deserted. Small parties of men were seen in the distance going over the kotul between the Takt-i-Shah and the Bala Hissar hill, the last remnants of the army. As the day advanced, a number of men and children were seen coming towards us from the city, who were evidently Hindoo

merchants. At the base of the hill they halted, as if not quite certain of their reception, and sent forward a messenger. On being beckoned to, they quickly came up the hill ; and soon Colonel Money, commanding the 3rd Sikhs, was surrounded by a body of Hindoos, who, wringing their hands, proclaimed a doleful tale of the misery they had gone through during Mahomed Jan's reign of terror, and of the losses of property they had sustained. Colonel Money gave them an order admitting them to Sherpur. When proceeding in this direction they caught sight of the Afghan prisoner we had taken. With fury they surrounded him and reviled him with their choicest epithets, some spat at him, and significantly holding their fingers round their throats, explained how they hoped we should treat him. The Afghan declared that he was simply an innocent man taking a walk. Unfortunately one of his tormentors recognised him as one of the petty leaders employed against us.

Rain now began to fall and the mist to rise. Being in an exposed position, the cold was severe; with delight we hailed the advance-guard of Gough's brigade approaching from the east, and about 2 P.M. we received orders to return to Sherpur. On the road back we saw many dead Afghans lying about, killed on the previous day. The 67th Foot were hard at work pulling down walls and cutting away trees. Snow succeeded the rain, and soon the roads were in a most slippery state. The tired baggage-

animals of the new brigade were severely tried; while our cavalry column, who were sent in pursuit of the enemy towards the Chardeh valley had to return at a walk, owing to the horses' feet becoming balled with snow.

General Gough's brigade had, marvellous to relate, met with little opposition between Jugdulluk and Kabul. Climate and the elements were, however, much against them; especially during their last march into Sherpur. Although the brigade was unlucky in not being able to join in the fighting of the 23rd December, their rapid advance no doubt hastened Mahomed Jan's attack on Sherpur, which attack we repulsed with ease; not that we have any particular reason to boast of this achievement. Had Mahomed Jan sent the six thousand Kohistanis and others, who attacked our east flank that morning, to assault Luttabund with its garrison of 700 men, and a comparatively weak position, and had the post fallen, then our relieving brigade would have had a hard time of it. The Luttabund post, however, commanded by a keen soldier, Colonel Hudson, would have been a hard position to take. Yet, with all his numerous hosts the Afghan general could not do this. Our enemies did not trust each other. But if the Afghans could not capture Luttabund, or check the advance of Gough with his 1,400 men, how could they reasonably expect to carry the defences of Sherpur held by 5,000 perfectly equipped troops? Our enemies, fortunately for us, relied too much on

their moollahs, many simple men believing that charms and blessings bestowed upon them by their rascally priests would turn our Martini-Henry and Snider bullets aside.

Any nation led by the nose by its priests is much to be pitied, especially a country like Afghanistan, where the moollahs are no better than other mortals. How many of our frontier wars are fomented by these fanatics! They encourage their disciples to murder, revolt, and sometimes even accompany them to battle, following in the rear, where, being the first to fly in the case of reverse, they generally manage to escape the death which overtakes their ignorant dupes and followers. Mahomed Jan took no advantage of his opportunities. Had the assault of the 24th been made on the morning of the 15th, when his troops were flushed with what they probably thought a victory, and when our defences were most incomplete, we should have had a desperate fight. Instead of this his followers ran loose in the city, rioting and pilaging to their hearts' content. Their keenness for fighting had the edge taken off, and many who had joined his standard for the sake of plunder were now in possession of what they had come for. Though possessed of an immense quantity of powder, no attempt was ever made at night to breach our position or blow in a gateway; and the bridge over the Logar river, which a bag of powder would have destroyed, and thereby entailed great difficulty on Gough's advance, was left alone.

December 25th.—Our first Christmas-day in Kabul was attended with true wintry surroundings. The ground was covered with two or more inches of snow, and the air was bitterly cold. We all wished each other the usual happy greeting, and sent cheerful thoughts to our fathers and mothers across the briny sea, many thousands of whom were now feeling the anxiety of uncertainty about our position. In the afternoon, with another officer, I went for a walk outside, to look at the different villages and walls held by the enemy. Our sepoy were busily engaged in dismantling them and obtaining fire-wood. In one village we came across several siege ladders of very rough workmanship. Their weight was enormous, each requiring two or four men to carry them. The bars were widely separate, each made to hold three or four men abreast. The most useless thing about them was that none could reach the top of a wall. Had we that day withheld our fire, and allowed the Afghans to get close up to the walls, even to affixing these useless ladders, how many hundreds would have fallen to our rifles under the walls! Mahomed Jan's chief engineer had quite overlooked the height of the Sherpur wall. We saw the ladder that had approached nearest the front wall; it more resembled a platform, and required four or six men to carry it.

The city of Kabul, after the siege, presented a woe-ful aspect, for the Afghans had apparently done their best to destroy their chief town. The streets were deserted. The majority of the shop-fronts had been

wrenched out, and the floors dug up in search of treasure. The Shor Bazaar, generally so bright in chintzes and silks, had been especially wrecked, as it was chiefly occupied by Hindoos. Every Hindoo shop in the city had been looted, and also several Mahomedan, but the majority of the latter escaped. Many of the large houses, belonging to the sirdars who had been friendly with us, were ransacked. The dispensary opened in the city was looted and destroyed, but the instruments and many of the drugs were hidden in safety. Kabul, like many other cities that have been destroyed, rapidly recovered itself, and six weeks afterwards looked very much the same as ever, and the shop-keepers under the new governorship of Wali Mahomed speedily made up for past losses by exorbitant charges.

The lessons learnt during our confinement inside Sherpur were not thrown away. The danger of the standing enclosures outside Sherpur had not been overlooked at our first arrival, but they had been let alone owing to the deep resentment which their destruction would have caused the Afghans. Both British and Native troops, as well as numbers of hired labourers, were now engaged in levelling to the ground all walls and villages and enclosures within 1,000 yards of its walls, except those which were to be turned to our own use. After all dangerous walls had been levelled, including a small portion of Deh-i-Afghani which gave us much trouble in December, wide roads were made in all directions from the

different gateways and all around Sherpur. A new wooden bridge was built over the river Kabul, on the direct road to Budkhak, by the Sappers and Miners. This bridge was commanded by a fort on the south bank. The fortified line around Sherpur was completed. The Behmaru heights were defended by a trench and wall along the whole length, with block-towers here and there, the eastern and western end being made especially strong. And so the cantonment of Sherpur, which Shere Ali commenced with British money, was completed with British labour and rupees.

A strong fort, capable of holding 1,000 men, was built on the west end of the Siah Sung hills, and a block-house on the west corner. The whole of the Sher Darwaza hill was strongly fortified, and rendered practically impregnable.

On the eastern end of the Koh-i-Asmai heights another impregnable fortress was erected, its eastern face built on the edge of solid rock. All these forts commanded the city of Kabul. Wide zigzag roads connected each with the plains. These military works and roads cost us a vast deal of money, and the present Amir, Abdul Rahman, receives them as an unembarrassed gift, for in return he is not required to pay even a nominal tribute. Indeed, the additional sums of money since advanced to enable him to carry on the management of the country, would make it almost appear that we were tributary to him.

We certainly owe Russia no thanks ; for twice now

has the presence of one of her ambassadors in Kabul, in 1837 and 1878, led us into an expensive war. The last half of the letter in the appendix, from Shere Ali to the late Emperor of Russia, is worth reading as regards this subject.

The Bala Hissar was again occupied by our troops in January, General Gough's brigade taking up their quarters there. The powder-magazine, now quite cleared out, was held by the 2nd Goorkhas, whose pickets occupied the hills above. Each one began to settle down into a groove, for no one could say how long the occupation of Kabul would now last. Many of us would like to have seen, even then, Kabul in flames, and our army marching Indiadwards, but our departure now would have been attributed to fear.

Building of men's and officers' quarters was again commenced. Mess-houses rapidly showed themselves. The line of communication was re-opened, and the post arrived with regularity. Adventurous Parsee and Mahomedan merchants began to come up from India, some of whom made large profits. Beer on its first arrival sold at four rupees a bottle, nearly eight shillings, and other articles were at first equally dear.

The climate in January and February was cold and bracing, and the fortunate few who possessed guns obtained good snipe-shooting towards Budkhak, as well as duck and teal in the ditches near the Logar river. About seven days' skating was enjoyed

at the end of the cold weather. The small bit of ice on the north of the Bala Hissar moat lasted longest, owing to the sun hardly ever getting at it; a pond on the Behmaru plain lasted for a few days; and one day the Behmaru lake itself, often frozen lightly over, was strong enough for skating. An unfortunate artilleryman was drowned here in less than four feet of water. He had ventured far out after a wounded duck, when the ice gave way. The water was hardly deeper than three feet, with a foot of mud below; still he was unable to get out, owing to the ice nearest him constantly breaking as he tried to raise himself, and after three quarters of an hour he became numbed and insensible, and was drowned.

When waiting for duck one moonlight night, on the edge of the lake, I saw at least fifty Afghans cross safely over at the narrowest portion. The ice was, of course, stronger then than in the day-time. In the spring of 1880 three different crafts were launched on the lake. The first was a punt made of bamboo, and covered with a tarpaulin, and built by some men of the F-A Royal Horse Artillery. The second was a flat-bottomed canoe called the "Duchess," built of wood and covered with bullock hides tacked carefully over, which made it light and buoyant, and, until it began to leak, it could be propelled with ease and swiftness with two Indian-shaped paddles. This little boat, which held four, afforded considerable amusement and pleasure to many.

On a hot summer's day the view from the middle of the lake was charming; and that obtained from the rising ground on the north side at sunset, looking towards the city, with the sun's rays gilding the tops of the surrounding hills, and the water of the lake in the foreground, formed one of the prettiest scenes of its kind in the neighbourhood of Kabul. A third boat was afterwards launched by some men of the 72nd, which was propelled with oars.

As the summer advanced, the lake began to dry up, until only one-third of its water remained. This was chiefly due to its main feeding channel having been diverted. A polo, cricket ground, and a steeple-chase course were soon started on the Behmaru turf. Inside Sherpur a Kabul Club was established under the able management of Major Gorham, R.A.

The first quarter of the new year quietly slipped away.

In the month of April our Government determined to send a large force from Candahar to Kabul, under General Sir Donald Stewart. The political objects desired by the Government of India, in reference to Sir Donald Stewart's march, are stated at page 15 of the Blue Book, in the minute by the Viceroy, Lord Lytton.

The latter may be thus summed up:

“ The Government is anxious to withdraw as soon as possible the troops from Kabul, and from all points beyond those to be occupied under the Treaty of Gundamuck, except Candahar. In order that this

may be done, it is desirable to find a ruler for Kabul, which will be separated from Candahar. Steps are being taken for this purpose.

“Meanwhile it is essential that we should make such a display of strength in Afghanistan as will show that we are masters of the situation, and will overawe disaffection. But it is not desirable to spread our troops over a large tract of country, or to send small columns to any place where they would encounter opposition and increase the hostile feeling against us. All that is necessary, from the political point of view, is for General Stewart to march to Ghazni, break up any opposition he may find there or in the neighbourhood, and open up direct communication with Sir F. Roberts at Kabul. This he can do either by the direct route, or by Kushi, as he may think to be most expedient, under such conditions as may exist when he is at Ghazni.”

A small division was despatched from Kabul under Major-General Ross to meet General Stewart's column, with a view of strengthening his position, and also giving him some supplies. This force, carefully selected, consisting of six guns Hazara mountain battery; four Guns Graham's screw battery; two squadrons 9th Lancers; 3rd Bengal Cavalry; 3rd Punjab Cavalry; 9th Foot; 23rd Pioneers; 4th Goorkhas; 24th Punjab Native Infantry. General Charles Gough acted as Brigadier. On the afternoon previous to the force leaving Kabul, a large Durbar was held inside Sherpur, by Sir Frederick



Roberts, at which the Sirdars, Khans, and Maliks of Kabul and the neighbourhood were addressed by Mr. Lepel Griffin, Chief Political Officer. This speech was delivered at great length in Persian. The translation of it leaves nothing that could be desired; but the delivery failed to rouse much animation on the faces of the huge crowd of Afghan Sirdars and others assembled inside the tent, who listened with the stolid indifference peculiar to Orientals.

On April 14th the division left Kabul and camped on the left of the Ghazni road near Killa Kazi. Maidan was reached on the third day. Here a halt was made, and small parties sent out to bring in fodder. Close in rear of our camp lay the village where our new governor of Maidan, Shah Baz Khan, was murdered in December, and which in consequence was set fire to by General Baker when his force marched by on the 11th December, and we left it enveloped in smoke. Curious to see the results of the fire, with another officer I went to look at it. The entrance we found blocked up half-way. An Afghan on the look-out, who opposed our admission, was soon sent about his business. Climbing the barrier, we found the interior of the village little damaged, only the upper rooms were burnt and the roofs partly destroyed.

Bahadur Khan, the head of the Umar Khel Ghilzais, who evaded our attempt to capture him in December, had since returned to his quarters, and

proceeded now to annoy us by firing on our foraging parties. A small force, under General Charles Gough, had to be sent against his village.

A reconnoitring party, under Captain the Hon. Charles Dutton, that day nearly fell into an ambuscade, and had a narrow escape. He and his escort, consisting of a few sowars of the 3rd Punjab Cavalry, were reconnoitring the course of the Kabul river up towards Sir-Chashma. The party proceeded safely some miles along the pretty hedges lining the track on the left bank of the river, as far as a small village beyond Roostum Khel. Here an old woman warned them not to ride onwards. Taking no note of the warning, they had not advanced much further in single file, when a volley was fired at them from the cover of a hedge close by. Fortunately nobody fell, and, finding themselves entrapped, the party immediately made for the high road, having to negotiate some difficult ditches. Here a sowar was thrown, his horse having fallen, slightly wounded by a ball in the leg. Mounting quickly behind another trooper, the whole party reached the road safely, and galloped homewards, pursued a short distance by their enemies. After going a mile or so they pulled up, and then only did a sowar allow that he had been wounded. A ball, however, had entered his right arm, high up, and passed through the armpit, finally making its exit by a large wound close over the heart. Yet he had galloped away without saying a word. Having made a long detour to

avoid the numerous villages about, the party did not reach camp until after dark. The fate of the gallant charger who had been left behind was most tragic and melancholy, and is worth recording. Picking himself up after his fall, he followed the road taken by his companions, through the long round in the sand-hills, and eventually reached the large open plain where we were encamped. The night was clear, and the moon shining brightly. On seeing his stable he galloped swiftly towards camp, neighing with delight at having found his companions and his dinner. Poor beast ! he cannot speak or answer the challenge of the Pioneer sentry, "Who comes there?" The man raises his rifle, and the charger, hit hard, staggers on : the next challenge is unanswered, another shot rings out in the still night, rousing the camp, and the brave horse falls to rise no more. So the 3rd Punjab Cavalry lost a useful charger, as it was found that the wound first received was of a trifling nature. This attack on the cavalry caused us a day's delay, for it was deemed necessary to send a small force to punish the offending villages.

The next day our march was resumed towards Ghazni, and on the third day we reached Skekhabad, only one march from Saidabad, the limit to which our orders allowed us to go. For two days we were slightly annoyed by firing from the hills on our right, especially opposite the village of Ben-i-Badan, where General Baker had been nearly surprised in November. Our road from Maidan led over the

Kabul river, here crossed by a ford, the fine old bridge close by being in ruins. The country on the road was little cultivated. Land turtles or tortoises of various sizes were the only objects of interest that we saw, and these looked like any other tortoises. An officer of the Transport Department, detecting an Afghan difference, picked up a specimen, placed it in a box, covered with canvas, and despatched it by post to the Zoological Society in London; three months afterwards, its receipt was gracefully acknowledged, and, strange to relate, the animal was alive and well, and perhaps is so now.

When nearing our camp at Shekhabad, the flash of a heliograph was suddenly observed on our front, and soon we were in possession of the pleasing news of the great victory gained by General Stewart over the Afghans at Ahmed Khel, near Ghazni; the most practical part of the news was that one thousand of the enemy had been killed, and their bodies counted on the plain. The distance heliographed this day was considerable, being upwards of fifty miles, the instrument working on the hill commanding the Sher Dahan pass, above Ghazni.

From Shekhabad our road descended to the bed of the Logar river, which at this point issued from the hills on our right, a clear stream, and disappeared in the gloomy defile between the hills on our left, known as the "Wardak Tangi." The river was here crossed by an old bridge, admitting only of foot passengers, and the whole force had to ford the stream. Our

camp was pitched at Saidabad, three miles beyond, in a horse-shoe hollow, the only ground available and not covered with crops. In rear of our camp the hills rose up from 600 to 1,000 feet. A long level plateau ran on our left flank, while on the opposite side of the small stream, 600 yards below, facing us, the hills were considerably higher, rising to nearly 2,000 feet, running into the Wardak Tangi on our left. On our right front were low rounded sand-hills, running back to some high and gravelly peaks. On first arriving in camp the alarm was given that several thousand men were collected behind these low hills to oppose our advance. A wing of the 4th Goorkhas was in consequence despatched to reconnoitre and seize the first line of hills. The cavalry, of course, were not required, and we were able to watch the infantry. Carefully the gallant Goorkhas breasted the hill, on which, from our vantage position, not a head or standard was visible. The summit was reached without a shot being fired, and then the Goorkhas advanced along the crest, but still no enemy was discovered. A few camel-men and camels had been taking a rise out of us. Still the feeling of the country was hostile to us, for three standards graced the heights in our front, and that night many fires were visible on the hills in our rear.

While looking at these standards, I saw on the skyline of a lofty ridge, at least 8,000 feet above the sea-level, some dark objects, which previous experience

on Mount Sika Ram told me were camels. On pointing them out to a senior cavalry officer, he was irate, and thought I was chaffing him, nor was he satisfied until he had examined them with his glasses.

The hills on our rear and left flank were invested with considerable interest. Here, in May 1866, a great fight took place between the present Amir, Abdur-Rahman, and the late Amir, Shere Ali Khan. The fight was not a bloody one, about twenty casualties occurring on either side. Shere Ali, considering the day had gone against him, fled to Candahar, while Abdur Rahman marched on to Kabul. Abdur Rahman had the best of the position, acting on the defensive, and the numerous sungurs or stone walls then standing about had been erected and defended by him with success.

On the day following our arrival in camp, the line of fires on the hills in our rear increased in number and approached nearer than before, threatening our position. A small force, consisting of part of the 9th Foot, the 4th Goorkhas, and four mountain guns, under the command of Colonel Rowcroft, of the Goorkhas, was sent against them on the following morning. The enemy were soon driven back, leaving between fifty and sixty dead bodies in our hands, while our casualties amounted to only two wounded and one Goorkha killed. The Goorkha fell to what is called Ghazism. Foremost in the attacking party, he reached the summit of a steep hill, apparently deserted by the enemy; the Goorkha advanced, and

was about to fire over a rock, when suddenly two Ghazis, concealed behind it, sprang on him. He shot one dead, but the other cleft his skull to the base with his razor-like knife. As the Goorkha fell his death was speedily avenged by Lieutenant Govan of the 9th, who shot the Ghazi dead. On the right of the attack some of the 24th Punjab Native Infantry, under Captain Wallerstein, who were out with Major Coombe, of the Quartermaster-General's Department, near Saidabad, accounted for several of the enemy.

On the following day standards and bodies of men appeared on these hills, threatening our camp. The infantry and screw guns were again sent up the heights, while three squadrons of cavalry made a detour up a valley on the right of the enemy, thus threatening their retreat. As the cavalry below reached the rear line of the enemy on the hills on the right threatening to cut them off, their previous slow retirement was rapidly changed into flight, and we were annoyed no more. Our casualties that day were, I believe, none. The accuracy of the screw guns at long ranges, as well as their handiness, were well tested on this and the previous day.

General Stewart's large force had in the meantime advanced, and halted within five miles of our camp, so that we were able to exchange visits and hear the news of their great battle. On the following day our camp was struck, and we returned with General Stewart himself to Kabul, where he took up the chief command. His army proceeded leisurely into

the Logar valley, and camped near the base of the Altimor pass and Baraki Rogan.

While our little skirmishes were going on at Saidabad a portion of the 92nd Highlanders, the Guides infantry and cavalry, and some guns of F-A Royal Horse Artillery, who had been despatched under Colonel Jenkins to Charasiab, were attacked and partly surrounded by a large body of Afghans, and reinforcements had to be sent to their aid from Sherpur under General Macpherson before the Afghans were finally routed.

At one time this little force was considerably pressed, the Afghans getting up very close, when they were observed drawing out their knives and placing them on the ground with fiendish pleasure, at the hope of soon using them against some kaffir throats. The appearance of the 2nd Goorkha bayonets on their flanks soon altered their aspect; and thus reinforced, our men rapidly routed them, and they fled in all directions. Had not this force been sent out from Sherpur General Ross's division would have met a large combination on the Ghazni road, and we should probably have recorded in our services the action of the Wardak Tangi, for here it was that the Afghan forces were to have met and opposed us.

Immediately after the return of Ross's division a brigade of all arms went out under General Baker collecting revenue, feeding itself locally, and thus relieving the pressure on the commissariat in Sherpur. General Roberts accompanied the force for change

of air. The route taken led by Charasiab, down the Logar valley, leaving Kushi on the left, then by the Altimor pass, and Baraki Rogan, where the different camps of General Stewart's force were pitched, and finally emerged through the Wardak defile and camped at Shekhabad. Up to this point, with the exception of an unsuccessful attempt to catch Padeshah Khan in his home near Zahidabad, nothing of interest occurred. The Wardak Tangi, or "Tight place," which the infantry marched through, well deserves its name. The cavalry of the force had to find a path along the left bank, the right, where the road was better, being reserved for the infantry and baggage. When nearing the exit, the cavalry received an order to turn to their left. All had to dismount, the heat of the sun was severe, and we had to trudge up a track some 500 feet high. After crossing some intervening hills we found ourselves nearly facing our old camp at Saidabad, when we gained the Ghazni road. From here the brigade marched to Maidan, and General Roberts returned to Sherpur, the 3rd Punjab Cavalry forming his escort as far as Golam Hyder's Killa. After several days' halt at Maidan, we moved up the course of the Kabul river to the sloping stony plateau above the village of Roostum Khel, where we halted for ten days. Our camp was here at an elevation of 7,000 feet, but the heat of the mid-day sun was very severe.

The Sir-Chashma, a source of the Kabul river, lay about twenty miles to the west of our camp, and

above it ran the road to Bamian, which was taken by Lady Sale and Akbar Khan's captives in 1841. The Kabul river wound slowly and peacefully along about half a mile below, its banks well wooded with willows, as well as in many places by the plane tree, under the cool shade of which some of us spent the hot days, finishing up with a bathe in the evening. Indeed, the river-scenery about here was quite pretty and English-like. The stony, barren hills above us were of considerable height, and were connected with spurs concealing some beautiful green little valleys with ranges behind reaching nearly 12,000 feet. Of course we all wished to be allowed to move on towards Bamian, but General Stewart would not permit of small parties getting beyond heliographic communication with Kabul.

After a month's outing General Baker returned to Sherpur by the Kotul-i-Safed Khak, passing under the Arghandi Kotul. Our last halt was made opposite Golam Hyder's Killa. In the large garden attached to the fort we ate our first cherries. From Golam Hyder's Killa the cavalry left with this brigade made a reconnaissance into the Koh Daman valley over the Surkh Kotul as far as the village of Karez Mir. Here a halt was made under the shade of the many mulberry trees beyond the village, and after a long dusty march we were looking forward to a cold breakfast carried on a regimental camel. The shade of the trees we were destined to lose, as suddenly the order was given to mount and retrace our steps

through the village, which we proceeded to do at a jog-trot, wondering what was up, and what had caused so sudden an alarm. At the foot of the hills beyond the village a halt was made, and eyes cast in all directions for an enemy whose perfect concealment and quietude alone gave rise to surmises, for not even a standard was visible, nor, when riding through the village, had we observed any signs of hostility. Half a troop was now dismounted and sent up the hill in skirmishing order, and reached the top safely. From here, a most commanding look-out, nothing was visible. A party of thirty or forty men were engaged below in burying a corpse. These men had been mistaken for an enemy, the only unpleasantness which resulted being that we had to eat our breakfast under a hot sun.

The brigade reached Sherpur about the 8th June. The cavalry were quartered on the right of the road running parallel with the Behmaru hills, our own regiment being nearly opposite the Behmaru gap on the hills. Here for a few days we had a good idea of a Kabul summer inside Sherpur. The heat of the sun made tent-life unpleasant, but the dust-storms which accompanied the heat made life a burden. When camping about we had been subject to frequent storms and whirlwinds which passed through camp, but the Sherpur dust-storm was worse than anything we had experienced, as the large traffic inside kept the dust on the move. After mid-day the wind slowly got up, and between 2 and 3 o'clock a perfect

gale was blowing, driving the dust violently along in dense black clouds, which penetrated the crevices of the most carefully closed tents. This daily storm generally lasted two or three hours, but sometimes continued blowing beyond sunset, when the mess-tent had to be closed, rendering even then the heat stifling. This afternoon wind and storms were a great drawback to the summer climate. The cavalry camp, after a few days, was moved out to the grassy Behmaru plain, about half a mile from the edge of the lake. Here not only was the air cooler and the glare less, but the dust-storms hardly ever reached us. Indeed, the Behmaru plain was by far the most pleasant camping ground in Kabul.

Shortly afterwards another brigade of all arms marched out for feeding and change of air, under Brigadier Charles Gough. Our road led over the Nanuchi Kotul to Pughman, where we camped for ten days. It is odd that even at this time some hostility was displayed against us, and a reconnoitring party of the 3rd Bengal Cavalry, at the Arghandi Kotul, was attacked by a small body of Afghans, who advanced on them in perfect military order. This small show of force on their part gave strength to the idea then prevalent that Mahomed Jan was again on the war-path. A reconnaissance in force the next day, however, failed to discover any of the enemy, and we were no more troubled in this direction. The Pughman valley is a beautiful green, well-watered, well-wooded spot. From here we marched into the

Koh Daman valley, camping at Karez Mir, at the very hills where Macpherson dispersed the Kohistanis on December 10th, 1879.

The Koh Daman valley is of great extent, and is hemmed in on all sides by hills, and on the northern and north-eastern sides by a considerable mountain wall. The country is well populated, and much of the land is under cultivation, while it possesses orchards, vineyards, and magnificent plane and walnut trees, which are as grateful to the eye as their shade is refreshing to the body. Our camps were invariably pitched on open, dry, hot, uncultivated land, and we lost the advantage of many a pretty sward and shady nook. The fear of political complications prevented our camps being pitched near villages.

While at Karez Mir our reconnoitring cavalry were frequently fired on by the Afghan followers of a blood-thirsty scoundrel called Mir Butcha, whose real cognomen should have been Mere Butcher ; a small force had, therefore, to be sent against him, consisting of all arms, under Colonel Norman. This force eventually reached a village six miles east of our camp, from the gardens of which fire was opened on us. As we advanced, so the Afghans, who hardly out-numbered us, retired ; and all had disappeared by 3 o'clock. Our artillery and infantry fired several rounds, but the distance was considerable. We eventually returned to camp without any casualties, although the doolies contained several men suffering from exposure to the sun,

which the local inhabitants took to be our wounded. We were, after this, no longer molested by Mir Butcha.

The final camping of this brigade in the Koh Daman valley was on the line of hills facing the village of Zimma, destined to play a part in the subsequent Afghan politics. In rear of our camp, Istalif, said to be the most beautiful city or village in Central Asia, could be seen peeping out of the dense and magnificent foliage surrounding it. Although six miles distant, we could only cast wistful eyes in this direction, as, at that time, our political fears were great, and not a single officer was allowed to visit it.

Abdul Rahman, our new Amir, was now daily expected at Charekar, a village about twenty miles eastward up the valley. About the last week in July our camp moved nearer Kabul, to Killa Haji, eight miles from Sherpur. Here the news reached us of the defeat of our troops under General Burrows at Maiwand, beyond Candahar. Authentic news of Sirdar Abdul Rahman's arrival at Charekar with a certain following had been received shortly before, and the difficulty experienced up to this, of finding an Ameer for Afghanistan, was now removed.

On 30th July, General Sir Donald Stewart and Sir Frederick Roberts and Mr. Lepel Griffin arrived at our camp. On the following day a meeting was arranged between Mr. Griffin and Abdul Rahman, on the high ground to the right of the village

of Zimma, and about six miles from Killa Haji. Thither, on the 31st July, Mr. Lepel Griffin, accompanied by his staff and an escort composed of a squadron of the 9th Lancers, 3rd Bengal and 3rd Punjab Cavalry, proceeded. A durbar tent had been pitched on a hill affording a good look-out on all sides. The Amir was accompanied by two or three hundred mounted followers and some footmen, while a large number, estimated at three thousand, accompanied him to within half a mile of the meeting-place, and there remained until the proceedings had terminated. Mr. Lepel Griffin's description of him is as follows:—

“Amir Abdul Rahman Khan is a man of about forty, of middle height, and rather stout. He has an exceedingly intelligent face, brown eyes, a pleasant smile, and a frank, courteous manner. The impression that he left on me and the officers who were present at the interview was most favourable. He is by far the most prepossessing of the Barakzai Sirdars whom I have met in Afghanistan, and in conversation shows both good sense and sound political judgment. He kept thoroughly to the point under discussion, and his remarks were characterised by shrewdness and ability. He appeared animated by a sincere desire to be on cordial terms with the British Government; and although his expectations were, as might have been anticipated, larger than Government was prepared to satisfy, yet he did not press them with any discourteous insistence, and the

result of the interview may be considered on the whole highly satisfactory."

On the following day some officers obtained leave to accompany the escort, and we had an opportunity of seeing the Amir. The chief faults in his physiognomy were coarse lips and a large sensual-looking jaw, indicative of the many subsequent acts of cruelty and oppression attributed to him since the commencement of his reign. On August 3rd, 1880, the political arrangements were completed, and Brigadier Charles Gough's brigade returned to Sherpur, several of the regiments of his brigade having to prepare to accompany General Roberts in his celebrated march from Kabul to Candahar, the cavalry corps to which I belonged being one of those selected.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Relief March from Kabul to Kandahar, August 1880.—Preparations for the March.—Baggage-Animals.—Our Ten Thousand.—Farewell to Kabul.—Route to Ghazni.—The Fortress.—Ghazni to Kelat-i-Ghilzai.—The Ground at Ahmed Khel.—Chardeh.—The Hazara Fort.—An English-speaking Afghan.—Foraging.—Povindahs.—News of Kandahar.—Lake Ab-istada.—Kelat-i-Ghilzai.—Tirandez.—The forced Cavalry-march to Robat.—The Kandahar Light.—Who are you?—Kandahar.—The Cavalry Reconnaissance.—Ayub Khan's Orders.

THE object of our march, as is well known, was the relief of the city of Kandahar, then closely invested by the victorious army of General Ayub Khan, who had defeated our forces under General Burrows, on the 27th July 1880, at Maiwand, forty-five miles distant from Kandahar. Our regiment, on its return, was again quartered on the grassy Behmaru plain. The few remaining days were fully occupied in arranging regimental kits, and in the disposal of our private property, which, small as it was, had to be left behind. All extra baggage was ordered to be sent back with General Sir Donald Stewart's division returning to

India through the Khyber pass. One small mule was allowed to each officer for tentage and baggage. My strong Heratee donkey, purchased on the Shutargardan pass in September 1879, stood me a good friend now. In addition to grain sufficient to feed him for ten days, he carried easily 180 lbs., and he was well fed up before the start. This sturdy little animal marched with me to Kandahar, through the Bolan pass to Sibi, then through Beluchistan, and arrived at Dera Giza Khan, many hundred miles distant, in perfect condition. When grain was scarce he was generally able to procure his own meal on the wayside, and the three pounds ten which he cost me was most usefully laid out.

At the mess-table, the battle of Maiwand, with the terrible slaughter of our troops, was, of course, much discussed, as well as its consequences. Would the diminished garrison of Kandahar be able to hold its own until our arrival? Ayub Khan's great strength in artillery, and the way he had used it, made him seem a somewhat dangerous foe. The rumour that Russian guidance was with him was duly weighed; while the report that his army was accompanied by 3,000 Turcoman Horse, as they were called, raised the hope that at last our cavalry might meet a foe worthy of its steel. What lay before us could not be foretold. At least the tiring monotony of ordinary camp-life—for most of us hated Kabul, Afghanistan, and Afghans generally—was now to be changed, and war was in the air. The march of General Roberts's

division to Kandahar caused no alteration of the original intention of our Government to vacate Afghanistan after the instalment of the new Amir Abdul Rahman. Two days after our departure, General Sir Donald Stewart's division marched for India. Sir F. Roberts's army was then cut off from all communication with India and the outer world. This fact added, perhaps, a touch of seriousness to the letters which, no doubt, most of us wrote the day before leaving Kabul, and invested the march with such intense interest to the general public.

At the time of the Maiwand disaster our army at Kabul contained the flower of the British regiments in India, as well as the crack regiments of the Native army. Of these General Sir F. Roberts, V.C., G.C.B., had the pick, and the supreme command.

The Infantry Division was commanded by Major-General John Ross, C.B.

The Brigades under him were:—

1st Brigade, Brigadier-General Macpherson, V.C., C.B.:—92nd Highlanders, Colonel Parker; 2nd Goorkhas, Colonel Battye; 23rd Pioneers, Colonel Collett; 24th Punjab Native Infantry, Colonel Norman; 6-8 Royal Artillery, screw-guns, European Mule Battery, Major Graham.

2nd Brigade, Brigadier T. Baker, C.B.:—72nd Highlanders, Colonel Brownlow, C.B.; 2nd Sikhs, Colonel Boswell; 3rd Sikhs, Colonel Noel Money; 5th Goorkhas, Colonel Fitzhugh; No. 2 Mountain Mule-Battery, Lieutenant-Colonel Swinley.

3rd Brigade, Brigadier Charles Macgregor, C.B. :— 60th Rifles, Colonel Collins; 15th Sikhs, Colonel Barter; 4th Goorkhas, Colonel Rowcroft; 25th Punjab Native Infantry, Colonel Hoggan; 11-9 Royal Artillery, European Mountain Battery.

Brigadier Hugh Gough, V.C., C.B., commanded the Cavalry Division, composed of 1,600 sabres :— 9th Lancers, Lieut.-Colonel Bushman; 3rd Bengal Cavalry, Lieut.-Colonel Mackenzie; 3rd Punjab Cavalry, Lieut.-Colonel Vivian; the Central India Horse, Colonel Martin.

Colonel Johnson commanded the Artillery, 18 guns; Colonel Æneas Perkins, C.B., the Royal Engineers; Colonel Low, the Transport Department; Colonel Badcock, the Commissariat; Colonel Chapman, R.A., was Chief of the Staff; Major Hastings, Chief Political Officer; Captain Straton, 22nd Foot, Superintendent of Army Signalling; Deputy Surgeon-General Hanbury, Chief Medical Officer.

We had no field-guns, all our artillery was carried on mules; twelve of the guns were 7-pounder muzzle-loaders, and six were screw guns.* Each of the latter consisted of two joints, which are beautifully fitted together by a powerful screw. When screwed home, and set up, the barrel of the gun is much

The screw-guns were, I believe, first used in the Zymukt expedition, Kuram Valley, under General Tytler, in 1879; at Saidabad, with General Ross's Division, April 1880; and at the battle of Kandahar. They will probably soon displace the present mountain-gun.

longer than an ordinary mountain-gun. The charge of powder is also heavier, and the range is accurate up to 3,000 yards. Our splendid body of troops numbered close upon 10,000; they formed essentially a fighting force, hampered only by such camp-followers and transport as were absolutely necessary.

The first week in August passed quickly enough. We bade good-bye to those friends who were returning to India and civilisation, as well as to the few spots about Kabul that interested us. To me the Behmaru lake had the greatest charms. It was now about one-fourth of its former size, so rapidly had the water dried up; and my quondam canoe, the "Duchess" was lying high and dry hundreds of feet from the water, her sides warped and twisted by the heat of the sun, and minus several planks, which, with the remainder have probably long since lighted the fire in some Afghan wigwam.

On the 7th August we marched to the ground east of the Bala Hissar, everything cut down to its minimum ready for the final start. The infantry brigades were camped on the plain west of Siah Sung, and it was wonderful to see the small area that a brigade now covered.

August 8th, 1880, Charasiab.—Our march for the relief of Kandahar commenced, the Cavalry Brigade leading the way. The first march was to be a short one. The trumpets sounded before dawn, and at an early hour we fell in below the Bala Hissar fortress. The Kabul citadel was soon hidden in the willow-

lined avenue leading towards Sherpur across the Kabul river. For the last time we passed Shere Ali's cantonment, where nods and farewells were exchanged with the garrison ; as hands were grasped, and "Good-luck to you," "Good-bye, old fellow," were heard on all sides, amidst cheers and martial music, we felt that thrill of excitement and emotion which few can fail to have experienced in the drama of a military life. We then passed on through the Deh Mazung gorge, under the grim Asmai height ; the Kabul river was recrossed for the last time, and the city left behind without a regret. Our route now led us across a small plain, thence to low gravelly hills with high and difficult peaks on each side ; and many of us recalled the 6th October 1879, for we were then passing over the very ground where the action of Charasiab was fought. After clearing the hills we debouched on the open plain beyond the villages of Charasiab, and our camp was pitched near the main road running to the Shutargardan pass. Our baggage was somewhat late in arriving, but the start, a great achievement, was over.

The 2nd, or General Baker's Brigade, camped behind us near Indiki ; the 1st and 3rd Brigades halted at Beni-Hissar, five miles from Kabul.

August 9th, Zahidabad.—The Cavalry Brigade reached Zahidabad, and camped on the left bank of the river Logar. About 8 o'clock in the evening we were joined by the Central India Horse. This regiment numbered 500 sabres, and was the strongest

cavalry corps in our brigade. Officers and men were weary after eighteen hours in the saddle ; and we provided the former with the best fare our mess could produce.

August 10th, Wazir Killa.—We were on the move before daybreak, for a long march of nineteen miles was before us. After fording the river we proceeded without much difficulty as far as the village of Deh-i-Nao. Here the road on the right bank of the river entered a gorge between two hills, which became so narrow that only two horses could walk abreast. The country near the halting-ground at Wazir Killa was much cut up by ravines, and it was very late before the baggage arrived. This was a very tedious march for the infantry.

August 11th, Baraki Barak.—We made a short march again, crossing the river and halting near Baraki Barak.

August 12th, Saidabad.—The Cavalry and General Baker's Brigade made a long and trying march to Saidabad on the direct road to Ghazni, crossing again not only the Logar river but also the Sumabarak pass, which must be nearly 1,000 feet above the river level. After fording the river, we skirted its right bank as far as the village of Amir Killa, near which the 1st and 3rd Infantry Brigades halted for the night. The 72nd led the way up the pass. The cavalry followed the infantry in single file, men and officers having to dismount and proceed on foot for the greater part of the way, and the ascent of both brigades took some

hours. On the Ghazni side of the pass was a hollow plain, sufficiently large and level for each regiment to form up. The descent to Saidabad, about four miles, was comparatively easy. The horses were picketed on the site of General Ross's camp in April 1880. The infantry rested a little higher up the valley. So long was this march, owing to the narrowness and steepness of the road, that little baggage had arrived by sunset, and nearly the whole force bivouacked in the open. The poor transport animals, waiting in their turn for hours at the foot of the pass, were very much tried.

August 13th, Takia.—Our brigade moved on early to Hyder Khel. Here we were preparing to halt, but General Roberts arrived with his staff and ordered us on to ground beyond the village of Takia, leaving the forage at Hyder Khel for the baggage animals of the 1st and 3rd Brigades who halted here. At Takia, the remainder of our baggage as well as that of the 2nd Brigade joined us. General Macpherson's troops followed our route over the Sambarak pass and joined General Macgregor, who had marched by an apparently long detour through the defile known as the "Wardak Tungi." The long road, however, proved much easier than the shorter cut over the pass, for steep ascents invariably cause stoppages and try the mettle of the best-laden baggage animals.

Shasgao.—Reached a fine camping ground at Shasgao, where all four brigades were for the first time camped together. The cavalry marched nearly

two miles to the right of the infantry. Two ravines, with steep sides, caused us much trouble at the start. The tents of the four brigades covered a considerable area of ground. The baggage animals obtained here a good supply of green food, which they much needed. Shasgao comprises several small villages, built on a high and open position.

August 14th, Ghazni.—A march of much interest, for we were to make Ghazni. About two miles from camp the easy ascent to the Sher-i-Dana pass commenced. The pass itself is about 8,600 feet above the sea-level. It is probably one of the easiest in Afghanistan, owing to its very gradual ascent and descent. The road being good and fairly wide, the baggage proceeded at a good swinging pace. The length of the pass proper is about four miles. Beyond it the road enters a hollow plain hemmed in by hills, which hide Ghazni. After passing through a low gap in the hill on the far side, the plain of Ghazni is entered, and the citadel, built on high ground, is seen in the distance far away on the right. Large villages and orchards hide the lower walls of the city; these we passed on our right, and by 1 o'clock our tents were pitched opposite Ghazni, about a mile distant.

Since our departure from Kabul we had completed a distance of one hundred miles in eight days, giving an average of twelve and a half miles a day.

The distances are nearly as follows:

August 8.	Bala Hissar to Charasiab	. 8 miles.
„	9. Charasiab to Zahidabad.	. 10 „

August 10.	Zahidabad to Wazir Killa	. 19 miles.
,,	11. Wazir Killa to Baraki Barak	8 ,,
,,	12. Baraki Barak to Saidabad	. 18 ,,
,,	13. Saidabad to Takia	. . . 8 ,,
,,	14. Takia to Shasgao	. . . 15 ,,
,,	15. Shasgao to Ghazni	. . . 14 ,,

The pictures of Ghazni in Fane's and other books on Afghanistan had familiarised most of us with the view we had anticipated. The fortress is now in a weak state of defence, the walls are built of great thickness at the base, but in several places are crumbling away. A dry ditch surrounds the city. Like Kabul, Ghazni has a citadel which commands the city by nearly two hundred feet. The streets inside were narrow and dirty, and the shop-stalls contained nothing worth buying. The view from the west of the citadel is extensive and commanding. Within its walls several British soldiers and officers were confined in 1841-2. Below it is a good-sized courtyard, into which opens the Kabul gate. This is the gate which was blown in by Durand's party, and through which our forlorn hope rushed on the 23rd July 1839, led by Brigadier Sale and Colonel Dennie. The gateway itself does not open directly on to the high road, but into a dark passage with high walls on each side, which quite conceals the entrance from the outside view. From this gateway we turned our horses' heads towards two tall obelisks, erected on the plain about half a mile on the road towards Kabul. They are of considerable height. One is

in a good state of preservation. In the evening it was announced that our march, which would lead over the battle-field of Ahmed Kheyl, might perhaps meet opposition.

August 16th.—Before daybreak the whole Cavalry Brigade moved off, and we had a sort of field day to ourselves, scouring the country and going through a few manœuvres. In this march from Kabul to Kandahar, each cavalry regiment took the lead in turn, commencing with the senior. The leading regiment had the advantage of getting ahead out of dust and delay, and its baggage also took the lead of the other cavalry baggage. On arrival in camp, a reconnoitring party under an officer was always sent out five miles ahead. It also escaped the tedious work of flanking the main body. Major Call, an officer of the Royal Engineers, who had accompanied Sir Donald Stewart's force to Kabul, was attached to our brigade, and from his previous knowledge was able to point out the road and all places of interest. After clearing the villages and orchards around Ghazni, we got into open country and soon rapidly approached the battle-field of Ahmed Khel. The ground on which the enemy made their splendid rush on our troops is comparatively flat, and covered by low gravelly hills, up which cavalry might charge, and is very different to the terrific position represented in one of our illustrated papers. The fight lasted hardly one hour, yet in that time the Afghan nation probably lost more in killed and wounded than they

had ever before sacrificed in combat with the Feringhees. One thousand corpses were said to have been counted on the plain, and the wounded must have been as many. Our camp was formed at Yerghatta (17 miles) a most desolate, arid spot. The infantry had a most trying time of it, owing to a dust-storm which overtook them.

August 17th.—Our regiment had the lead to-day. When nearing our halting ground at Chardeh, we passed on our left a large, fortified village, the walls and roofs of which were lined with men, women, and children. Some of the garrison, fully armed, soon made their appearance, and we then heard that the village was held by Hazaras (foes of the Afghans), who had followed General Sir Donald Stewart's forces in April 1880, looting what they could get. They stated that they had been besieged in this village ever since, and no doubt they must eventually have been starved out and all destroyed. Our arrival, fortunately for them, raised the siege, and their delight was really worth witnessing. Not only many of the men, but also several women and children, had been wounded by bullets. That night they made their way into their neighbouring hills. After sending back a report our regiment moved on towards the camping ground a few miles ahead. While awaiting the arrival of the baggage, we were gazed at by a number of well-dressed Afghans. All were well armed, and the handsome accoutrements and pistols of one especially attracted my own and another

officer's attention. My knowledge of Persian was limited, but I had learnt three or four interrogatory sentences in common use, and accordingly asked, in my best pronunciation, "How much does it cost?" To our surprise he replied, not in Persian, but in good English. On inquiring how he had come to know the language, he said that he had learnt it in Australia, where he had been sent in charge of the camels which accompanied the expedition that explored the continent of Australia. His acquaintance with Australia and his knowledge of English had not improved his appearance, for he looked a most cunning villain. It seemed a curious fact, meeting such a man in the middle of Afghanistan. We afterwards heard that he had married an Englishwoman in Australia who accompanied him to Bombay. Here the authorities wisely detained and refused to allow her to leave British territory. Having once visited Australia, I know that as recently as 1869 it was by no means an uncommon thing for English emigrant girls to marry Chinamen, who, they said, made kind husbands and did not drink, or beat them. The Chardeh villages form one of the head-quarters of the tribes of Afghan merchants called Povindahs, who march yearly with merchandise to India. A dip in the hills some fifteen miles to our left marked the spot where their caravans leave the plain and enter the hills. After a journey occupying perhaps two months, during which they have to endure many hardships, they emerge from the rocky fastnesses by the Ghuleri pass, and enter the

Gomul valley in British territory about sixty miles from the city of Dera-Ismail-Khan. During this journey in the hills, not only do they often fight among themselves for precedence through a pass, but they have to defend themselves against the Waziri robbers who occupy the hills about the course of the Gomul river. Their delight on reaching the happy confines of British territory is great. As each tribe emerges from the pass, drums are beaten and guns fired, with shouts of joy. The want of forage tells terribly on their flocks and cattle, and I have seen their sheep so weak and thin as to be unable to move out of my horse's way. During the whole of the Indian winter, their women and children reside in their camps or *kiris* near the hills, while the men march their caravans into the heart of India, many of them travelling by rail as far as Bombay and Calcutta. In the month of April they again congregate like vultures near the passes, and fight their way back through the hills. It was probably on account of the approach of their marching season, that they were loth to give us the number of camels necessary to fill up the gaps in our transport, in spite of our only requiring them as far as Kandahar; and it became necessary to send out some Goorkhas with the transport officers before a portion of the number promised to us was secured.

August 18th, Karez-i-Obah.—Each march now seemed hotter and more wearisome, for we were daily descending some hundred feet. Very little water was found on the road. Although an irrigation channel or

irrigated land often delayed the baggage, yet a long march was more easily borne by man and beast if both could get water frequently. Close to our halting-ground at Karez-i-Obah, a difficult nullah or ravine with water in it had to be crossed. At such places the eagerness of the thirsty baggage-animals to rush at the water often disarranged their loads, and sometimes the tired beasts lay down to cool themselves, and required a good deal of persuasion to make them move on.

August 19th.—Our regiment guarded the left flank, giving a troop to form part of the rear-guard. The march was long and tedious, and the heat of the sun very great. Even riding at a snail's pace became wearying to horse and man, for we had to keep our line and touch with the brigades in the centre. The infantry must have been severely tried, for of course their water-bottles were much sooner emptied than a cavalry soldier's. The distance to Mukur is nineteen miles. For hours we marched without coming upon a drop of water. At length, a few miles from camp, we sighted a line of hillocks running diagonally across the plain. These hillocks look like monster ant-hills. They are welcome to the eye of a thirsty traveller, for they indicate the position of the air-shafts, which are excavated every 200 or 300 yards along the course of an underground water-channel. These shafts are of considerable depth, and without a long rope there is no means of getting at the water below, which is always deliciously cool. One rascally

camp-follower, who possessed a brass vessel with a long string attached to it, made a little fortune that day by selling drinks to his parched comrades. We watered our horses on the left of our route where the channel crossed an open ravine, the horse being as impatient as his rider ; and what nectar is sweeter to a sunstruck man than a draught of really cold water !

August 20th.—Another trying march of nineteen miles under a blazing sun to Panjak. These long marches were terribly fatiguing to the rear-guard, who necessarily arrived late in the day and procured a minimum time for rest and food.

About twenty-four miles to the left of Mukur, among the hills, is a large lake known as the Ab-istada. According to the map its greatest length is seventeen miles and its greatest width ten miles. The water is said to be salt. After heavy falls of rain, the lake overflows, and the surplus water which runs down into the river Lora, skirting the foot of the hills, is said to be salt. The river Lora joins the Aghastan, and both empty into the river Turnak, which joins the Argundab river below Kandahar.

August 21st.—Another long march, but occupied by us more pleasantly than ordinarily, in collecting forage. Long before daybreak we moved out, and at sunrise reached the appointed villages on the right of our route. Majors Euan Smith and Protheroe accompanied us as political officers. Our forage was very successful in obtaining grain, which was scrupulously

paid for. We visited four or five villages close together. We have some reason for recollecting these villages, for here our best trooper at the sword and lance exercise must have been killed. He was sent back with a message to one of the villages we had finished with, where he was probably struck unawares and killed, as neither he nor his horse were ever seen again. Nor was he missed until after our arrival in camp, when it was impossible to return. The village belonged to one of the tribe of Povindahs, before mentioned, who received such kind treatment in our own territory. We did not reach our halting ground, Garjon, until near 7 o'clock, our horses having been out since 3 A.M. Close to camp we passed the files of the rear-guard regiment of Goorkhas, covered with dust, toiling wearily and slowly along, their faces perhaps not looking quite so merry as usual. Our tents were pitched on some high ground, on the right bank of the Turnuk river, whose course we were to follow as far as Khel-i-Akhund. During the day Captain Straton had opened heliographic communication with Kelat-i-Ghilzai, 33 miles distant, and in the evening we heard of the disastrous *sortie* made by the garrison of Kandahar on the 16th August. Our loss, including General Brook (the only officer of this rank killed during the campaign), seemed so terribly severe, as to give rise to the surmise that a desperate case had led to desperate measures. Not quite understanding the state of affairs, the conclusion generally arrived at was that

the condition of the garrison must be getting very critical.

August 22nd.—After a few hours' rest we were again on the march, during the last hours of the night. It was our turn to guard the flanks. The march was difficult, owing to many undulations on the road. Our horses were once watered in the river which ran some distance on our left. At our camping-ground, Baba Kazai, a stony desolate-looking spot, we found forage and wood, stored by the 2nd Beloochee Regiment, which formed part of the garrison of Kelat-i-Ghilzai, one march distant, so that our road ahead was clear.

August 23rd, Kelat-i-Ghilzai.—The cavalry had the lead to-day, and every man was anxious to reach Kelat, for we should individually then be able to hear of the state of Kandahar, and the fate of the besieged garrison. By 8 o'clock we had sighted the fortress. A wide ditch, with deep black mud in it, somewhat delayed our approach to the fortress, outside which our Cavalry Brigadier received Colonel, now Sir Oriel Tanner, K.C.B., who commanded the garrison, and his staff. We eventually moved on, and our camp was pitched on the plain beyond and on the south side of the fort. The 2nd Beloochee Regiment, two companies of the 66th Foot, two guns of E.B. R.H.A., were already in camp outside, ready to join our force on the morrow, when Kelat-i-Ghilzai was to be abandoned.

The fortress is situated on the top of a commanding

hill with steep sides. The walls are built on the edge, and are high and fairly strong. The gateway is massive and approached by a steep road. The interior covers about three acres of ground. In the middle is a curious mound of earth, about a hundred feet high, with a flat top. Near its base is a fakeer's house, or tomb, with a few trees around it. In the middle of the fortress a spring of beautiful clear sparkling water gurgles out of the ground. My thirsty companion and I (for the heat was great) turned our horses at it, as we suddenly came on it, and both animals eagerly plunged in their heads for a drink. My Arab, generally a huge drinker at every opportunity, instead of taking a long pull, quickly withdrew his nose, and began to toy with the water. On dismounting for our drink, we found, to our disappointment, that this delicious-looking water was quite warm.

The marches between Ghazni and Kelat-i-Ghilzai are nearly as follows:—

Aug. 16.	Ghazni to Yergatta	.	.	17 miles.
„ 17.	Yergatta to Chardeh	.	.	16 „
„ 18.	Chardeh to Karez-i-Obah	.	.	15 „
„ 19.	Karez-i-Obah to Mukur	.	.	19 „
„ 20.	Mukur to Punjak	.	.	19 „
„ 21.	Punjak to Gajon	.	.	16 „
„ 22.	Gajon to Baba Kazai	.	.	17 „
„ 23.	Baba Kazai to Kelat-i-Ghilzai	.	.	17 „

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This gives the wonderful average of seventeen miles a day. The distance actually traversed is really greater if all the ups and downs and detours are taken into account.

August 24th.—A day's halt was made. It was especially needed by the transport animals and Kahars. The Kahars carried the doolies for the sick, and the work they performed was certainly the hardest of all our camp-followers.

August 25th.—Marched to Julduk, where a wing of the 2nd Beloochees had preceded us the day before to collect supplies and food. The Beloochees kept the march ahead of our main body as far as Khel-i-Akhund. The sepoy are tall fine-looking men, and of much larger physique than some of the other Bombay regiments we afterwards met with. This regiment was justly celebrated for its great marching qualities.

August 26th.—Reached Tirandez. The heat was very severe, and the sun more powerful than ever; but the infantry marched along splendidly. Our camp was pitched on the right bank of, and almost level with, the river; the proximity of the water always proving a great boon to the camp-followers. By mid-day the sun poured down on us most fiercely while waiting for the tents, and we made the best shelter we could by throwing our great-coats over the small scrub growing in the sand. Near Tirandez is a curious pillar. This is said to commemorate the spot where an arrow, shot from the hill above by the

hand of the Emperor Ahmed Shah, is said to have pitched. News was received this day from Kandahar stating that Ayub Khan had raised the siege of the city, on the south side, on the 24th August. That afternoon our regiment—the 3rd Punjab—and the 3rd Bengal Cavalry, received orders to be ready to march at midnight, our destination being Robat, 34½ miles distant, from whence we were to open direct communication with Kandahar by heliograph. We retired to rest as early as possible, for the first trumpet was to sound that night at 11.30 p.m.

August 27th.—Soon after midnight both regiments quietly filed from camp into the high road, and we commenced a march of more than usual interest, for our curiosity would be satisfied, and yet we could not foretell what adventures were before us. Our sick, of course, proceeded with the main column: our baggage only accompanied us, and caused little delay, owing to its excellent packing and the good condition of the regimental baggage-ponies. These are in constant training at all times, their life even in a civil station being one perpetual march, carrying grass and forage.

Brigadier Hugh Gough, V.C., C.B., and Colonel Chapman, R.A., the Chief of the Staff, left camp after we did, and accompanied our column. Once in the main road, which on a dark night might have been difficult to find and more easy to lose, we marched along silently enough in the grim moonlight. Keeping awake on horse-back all night is by no means so easy an

accomplishment as one might think. It was most curious watching men sound asleep in the saddle, their heads bobbing backwards and forwards, sometimes nearly on their chargers necks, and the poor beasts, more tired than their masters, were often half asleep themselves. One officer, whose staff duties by day were very stirring, over-reached himself in his oscillations and fell over sideways to the ground, fortunately without receiving more harm than a sudden and unpleasant awakening. We made several short halts on the march, feeding our horses in the fields. Our last halt was made near water, and then we struck off to the right for five or six miles over some stony, fiery-hot plateaux towards the head of the plain at the end of which Kandahar was situated. We halted a little above Robat about 10 o'clock. On the road we passed several villages with domed instead of flat roofs, which showed we had passed into a different country. In the long plain before us no tents, dust, or objects like an enemy were visible. Indeed, the villages and all the country around seemed deserted, and Ayub Khan was reported to have emptied them of forage ; as a rule, in Afghanistan, empty villages in war time show that the fighting men have been drawn off for hostilities.

And now the object of our march, heliographic communication with Kandahar, had to be effected. With the exception of Colonel Chapman and Major Call, R.E., none of the officers knew anything of the aspect of the country. A line of hazy, irregular-

looking hills closed the end of the valley. Captain Straton, with his signallers, soon had a heliograph laid in the direction pointed out as that of the citadel, twenty miles distant. For more than ten minutes, which seemed a much longer time, our light was unanswered. We wondered whether the garrison were on the look-out. Captain Straton then took another heliograph to a hill on the right, and laid his light on. At last a faint light, like a hazy moon, appeared in the direction of Kandahar. The garrison were evidently on the *qui vive*, and I think the pulses of those looking on beat a trifle quicker. It disappeared and again shone out, and was slowly focussed on us. The signaller read out the message "Who are you?" Their light was then turned on Captain Straton's glass, and he received the news. The first sight of the Kandahar light was certainly one of the most interesting incidents of a wearying march. We heard, in the course of the day, that Ayub was still at hand, camped with all his army on the far side of the hills two miles north of Kandahar. This was good news for all. General Roberts was thus in direct communication and conversation with Kandahar on the twentieth day after his leaving Kabul, the distance accomplished in this time being just over 300 miles. Had it been advisable, or had there been any urgent necessity, our two cavalry regiments with their baggage might have reached Kandahar itself (318 miles) on the 21st day. While it must be allowed that the whole force, men

and officers, had done their duty nobly, and had accomplished a march which has seldom been surpassed, still, the key to the movement was the firm determination of the General commanding. Few commanders have been more personally liked by all, from the drummer to the colonel, than was General Roberts; and the national and universal admiration which this march and subsequent complete victory inspired, has stamped it as one of the great achievements of the British army.

Our baggage was formed up behind our regiments by 11 o'clock, and we soon moved on to the ground near the villages of Robat. It was becoming hotter and hotter every day, and we discovered with delight a plantation of small trees near our camp, which afforded some slight shade, and where we procured some green clover for our horses. In the afternoon our videttes reported the approach of cavalry from the direction of Kandahar, advancing along the road, and a cloud of dust could be seen approaching. A staff officer soon appeared in the lines, with orders; the "boot and saddle" was sounded, and the men stood to their horses, ready for the foe. But only for a short time, as the new arrivals turned out to be friends, in the shape of Colonel St. John, Political Officer at Kandahar, and Major Leech, V.C., escorted by a troop of the Poonah Horse. The villages of Robat had been thoroughly cleared out, and, beyond chopped straw and some fire-wood, little could be found. On the evening of our arrival at Robat, or

the next day, two emissaries from Ayub Khan reached our camp. They were quietly received, and lodged for the night in the tent of one of our veteran native officers. What the object of their mission was did not transpire. They were dismissed from camp the next day before the arrival of our main body. Natives are very matter-of-fact in forming conclusions, and it is just possible that the small part only of our force which they saw may have led Ayub Khan to believe that we were not so strong as we were reported to have been, and perhaps, may have helped his determination to stay and fight.

August 28th.—The infantry division and the remainder of the cavalry reached Robat from Shahi-i-Safa, a distance of twenty-two miles.

August 29th.—Halt for all brigades. It being Sunday, service was held in the Head-Quarters camp by the Chaplain to the Forces, the Reverend J. W. Adams.

August 31st, before Kandahar.—The force as compact as possible, with flanks well protected, marched from Momund at an early hour. The 3rd Bengal Cavalry were in luck, and it was their turn to lead that day. We passed Deh-i-Kwajah, the village where the fatal sortie of the 16th August had taken place, and watered our horses in a deep ditch near the city wall, a proceeding which took some time. Here General Nuttall, who commanded the Kandahar cavalry, came out with his staff, and we received invitations to breakfast inside. Our brigade then

moved on, and halted on the south side of the city opposite the Shikarpur gate; the infantry brigades in the meantime had marched by the south front of the city towards the site of the cantonments in the west. About mid-day the 3rd Bengal Cavalry received orders to move in this direction. After waiting an hour or more in the blazing sun, the remainder of the cavalry pitched their camp in the fields behind. We found a village close by, facing the city, entrenched, and noticed embrasures for guns made with much skill. The banks of a canal had been raised and loop-holed. This was one of the villages abandoned by Ayub on the 24th. A few officers were allowed to visit the city and get some lunch; and we took a peep from the wall, on the north side of the city, where we got a view of Ayub's vedettes in the distance, and the long line of hills, with the Baba Walli pass in the middle, behind which his camp was then pitched. Everything at this time was quite quiet. Several soldiers and members of the garrison explained the position to us. We being fresh arrivals, keen for a fight, could look upon things with an unbiassed and confident mind; whereas the garrison, who had twice felt the power of Ayub's arm, had, and really justly so, a much higher opinion of his army.

The remark which one of our party made, "that by 2 o'clock on the morrow we shall have that line of hills," appeared to excite expressions of annoyance and incredulity on the part of the few of the garrison looking on, as if such a thing were an impossibility.

The hour eventually turned out to be twelve instead of two. In the afternoon musketry and artillery-fire was heard in the direction of Ayub's army, and we could distinctly see the flash and smoke of the enemy's guns on the Baba Walli Kotul and elsewhere. There was no doubt now about Ayub Khan's meaning fighting. At sunset the 3rd Bengal Cavalry returned to camp much pleased with their day's work, and we received the explanation of the enemy's fire. Their regiment, accompanied by General Hugh Gough, V.C., his staff, and Colonel Chapman, supported by the 15th Sikhs, proceeded along the Herat road to reconnoitre the enemy's position. The road passed within a mile of the Pir Paimal hill, the enemy's extreme right, some villages and orchards intervening. The cavalry were allowed to continue a considerable distance unopposed, and were able to gain a side view of the rear of Ayub Khan's position. The enemy then showed themselves, and made an attempt to cut them off. The cavalry were then ordered to return, and the Afghans unmasked two batteries—one on the Pir Paimal slope, and the other on the Baba Walli pass. The 3rd Cavalry, under Colonel Mackenzie, retired in perfect order, notwithstanding the fact that three or four rounds of shot passed through the gaps between the squadron, which most fortunately did no harm. The musketry-fire caused some casualties, and the 15th Sikhs, in covering the retreat, were hard pressed; for as soon as our necessary retirement commenced, the Afghans became very bold, and swarmed down

from the Pir Paimal, waving their knives and swords in defiance.. The 4th Goorkhas were then sent in support. Major Willock, of the 3rd, was struck in the neck by a spent bullet, and the charger of one of General Gough's staff was shot under his rider.

We heard afterwards that the enemy considered that we had attempted to attack their position, and had failed in so doing. Ayub Khan is reported to have issued to his troops a general order, congratulating them on this the third victory they had gained, and informing them that the Bengal were no better than the Bombay troops, and that Kandahar would soon be in his hands.

Little did he know the mettle of our commander, or the stuff our troops were made of. Still less did he imagine that our reconnaissance was a grand success, and that from it resulted the plan drawn up that evening, which on the following day, after three hours' fighting, cost him his army and his camp.

We retired to rest that night knowing that there was to be a fight on the morrow.

The marches from Kelat-i-Ghilzai to Kandahar are as follows:—

	Miles.
Aug. 25. Kelat-i-Ghilzai to Julduk . . .	15
„ 26. Julduk to Tirandez (Minar) . . .	14½
„ 27. Tirandez to Shahr-i-Safa (Mound) . . .	12
(Cavalry reached Robat.)	
„ 28. Shahr-i-Safa to Robat . . .	22½
(Infantry.)	

	Miles.
Aug. 30. Robat to Momund	7
„ 31. Momund to Kandahar (Cantonments)	13
	<hr/>
	84
	<hr/>
Total Distances—Kabul to Ghazni	100
Ghazni to Kelat-i-Ghilzai	136
Kelat-i-Ghilzai to Kandahar	84
	<hr/>
	320

Days marched, 21; average, $15\frac{1}{4}$ miles a day.

Since writing the description of the march, having myself ridden all the way, an officer who marched with his regiment has given me a short account from the pedestrian point of view:—

“As one who took part in the march, and actually walked the whole distance, I can safely say it was extremely hard work, and could not possibly have been done except under a General like Sir Frederick Roberts, who was believed in and trusted by all ranks, and who inspired a determination to fall down rather than give in. The hardest marches were from Ghazni to Yergatta, the last three hours of which was through a blinding dust-storm; from Muker to Punjak (19 miles), a march without any water, except one muddy stream, the whole distance; and from Khel-i-Akhund to Robat, the weather on this day being like an Indian hot-weather day. There were few serious cases of illness amongst the European troops, but much foot-soreness; donkeys were bought in large

numbers, on which the foot-sore men were placed. After Kelat-i-Ghilzai everyone suffered much from diarrhœa. This, added to poor food, reduced the men so, that I do not think the force could have marched much further than it did. Amongst the native soldiers were a few deaths, and the mortality amongst the camp-followers was much greater than was generally known. The work on the ranks was excessive. Every man in my batta was, if not on 'picquet,' on some 'fatigue' every day, either before starting in the morning, or after arrival in camp. The chief cause of fatigue, however, was want of sleep. The force generally marched so early in the morning, and rear-guards got in so late, that men on this latter duty obtained very few hours' rest. I consider it was simply the pluck of the men, inspired by the General's presence and encouragement, that pulled the force through."

CHAPTER XV.

The Battle of Kandahar.—Ayoub Khan's Position.—9 A.M.—
The 1st and 2nd Brigades advance.—The Cavalry Brigade
pursues.—The Prisoner.—Major White.—Death of Colonel
Brownlow, C.B.—The Return March to India.—Beluchistan.
—Finis.

THE position occupied by Ayoub Khan was a range of hills, running east and west, three miles to the north of the city of Kandahar. His line extended for a total distance of a mile and a half from the hill known as the Pir Paimal on the right, to the Baba Walli pass on the left, though some of his regulars occupied the hills four miles further eastwards, as far as the Morcha pass. Over the Baba Walli pass ran the road to Mazra, where his extensive camp was pitched. A mile to the west of the Pir Paimal was the high road to Herat. The intervening country was occupied by the village and high ground of Gundigan, and walled enclosures and orchards. All this space was strongly occupied by Ayoub's irregulars, and particularly the corner of the Pir Paimal, where six guns were in position, three on the north and three on the south side. The

Baba Walli pass was also defended in great force, and its approach swept by a battery of artillery. In advance of his position, in the direct line of our subsequent turning movement, was the large village of Gundi Mulla, Sahibdad, built on a low hill. This was also strongly held by the enemy.

Between Ayoub Khan's forces and the city of Kandahar, facing the Pir Paimal and the village of Mulla Sahibdad, were two detached hills about a mile in length. These hills were known as Picket Hill on the right, and Karez Hill on the left. General Roberts' infantry occupied the ground behind them. About 700 yards to the left, west of Karez Hill, another range commenced, running south-west towards the old city of Kandahar. The intermediate ground was partly enclosed, and through it ran the high road to Herat which led to the Argundab valley, one of Ayoub Khan's lines of retreat.

An hour before daybreak our whole infantry force was under arms; but, as soon as it was evident that the enemy intended no immediate measures, the troops fell out again and partook of breakfast. The thermometer that morning stood at 105° , a fact worthy of note, for the pursuit of the soon flying enemy by our cavalry was most materially affected by it. Meanwhile, General Sir F. Roberts' plan of operations had been matured, and explained by him personally, at 6 o'clock, to all officers commanding. It was briefly this: the enemy's centre and left (the

Baba Walli pass), where his position was almost unassailable, were to be threatened. To accomplish this, the Bombay troops under Brigadier-General Burrows, and the Bombay Cavalry under General Nuttall, were drawn up as if ready to attack these points. Some of the Bombay Cavalry also watched the Morcha pass. Our real attack was to be made on the enemy's right by the infantry of the Kabul Division. This attack was to be led off by the 1st and 2nd Brigades, the 3rd Brigade forming the reserve. Major-General John Ross commanded the Infantry Division. The troops were to breakfast at 7 A.M. and to be in their appointed positions at 8 o'clock, carrying one day's cooked provisions. The tents and kit were to be stored in a walled enclosure.

The Cavalry Brigade, carrying two days' cooked rations, was to advance on the enemy's right by the village of Gundigan and the Argundab valley ; thus threatening the enemy's rear and flank, and cutting off his line of retreat towards Girishk, or through the hills on the north side of the valley, by Kakrez. Before 8 A.M. the cavalry moved off from their camp near the Shikarpur gate of Kandahar, and advanced by the west of the city towards Karez Hill. The 3rd Bengal Cavalry again had the lead. The enemy's guns on the Baba Walli pass were already in action, and the dust raised by our horses attracting Ayoub Khan's attention, he sent three shells at us, which luckily burst harmlessly on our flank. After passing the infantry brigades drawn up ready for the assault,

we were eventually formed up in a large enclosure in the gap between the Karez and old Kandahar line of hills. Here the men dismounted and stood to their horses; our further intended advance was stopped by the enemy having occupied the village of, and high ground about, Gundigan, as well as the hills commanding our line of advance along the Herat road. In our present enclosure we were quite concealed from Ayoub Khan's position, which was fortunate, as a few well-directed shots might have caused great confusion amongst the horses. While waiting here, part of the wall of the enclosure was levelled by the Sappers and Miners, to enable us to advance rapidly when ordered. Here the supports of the Kandahar garrison placed at General Hugh Gough's disposal joined us. They consisted of E-B R.H.A., 4 guns; 2-7th Foot, two companies; 28th Bombay Native Infantry, four companies.

Almost punctually at 9 A.M. the heavy boom of 40-pounders, in position on the right of Picket Hill, stirred the air, and the battle on our side commenced. The fire was directed at the enemy's guns on the Baba Walli Kotul, 2,000 yards distant, and in the direction of his camp beyond. The din and excitement increased when the twelve guns of the C-2 R.A. and 6-8 R.A. (screw battery) opened fire on the village of Gundi Mulla Sahibdad. Almost at the same time the four guns of the E-B R.H.A. under Captain Slade, drawn up at the base of old Kandahar Hill on our left, came into action, and the artillery battle

raged fiercely. As yet the cavalry were necessarily inactive, and we viewed as much of the fight as the enclosed nature of the ground exposed to view. Fronting us on the north side of the road was a good-sized field, with a village in one corner occupied by our pickets. From the roof of this village a fair view could be obtained of the dense array of orchards and enclosures as far as Gundigan, now all filled with an invisible enemy who even occupied the trees. There is no doubt that Ayoub's army was in the highest spirits at the apparent result of our reconnaissances on the previous day; and had we not taken the initiative, we should ourselves have been subjected to an attack. The confidence engendered by the supposed discomfiture alluded to, was greatly strengthened by a second order issued by the Afghan General. That morning, when the tents of the brigades were being struck for storing previous to our assault, the enemy's look-outs observed the movement and exultingly reported it. Ayoub Khan is said to have been as much elated as he was deceived. He informed his troops that we were off to India, and that after sacking the city of Kandahar he would march on to Delhi by the Bolan pass. These incidents no doubt proved of the greatest value to our arms by keeping the whole Afghan army with their tents, guns, and camp equipage at Mazra, and, in consequence, our subsequent victory was more complete and final than it might otherwise have been.

General Macpherson's brigade was the first to

advance, the 92nd Highlanders on the right, and the 2nd Goorkhas on the left, leading ; supported by the 24th Punjab Native Infantry and the 23rd Pioneers, who also formed an escort to the screw guns. The shells of our batteries were bursting with rapid precision over the village of Mulla Sahibdad, crashing through the walls and roofs, and, from our point of view, we could see numbers of the enemy retiring towards the Pir Paimal behind, thus escaping the shells which were chiefly directed at the village named. The 2nd (General Baker's) Brigade, soon after moved on to the assault, and deployed in beautiful order in the open ground on our front. The 72nd on the left, and the 2nd Sikhs on the right, led the attack. They were supported respectively by the 5th Goorkhas, the 3rd Sikhs, and the 2nd Belooches. All were soon lost to view in the orchards beyond. The enemy's guns were now dealing handsomely with the Horse Artillery on our left. Some of their shells burst fairly on the hill above and some close behind the battery, while many pitched harmlessly in the field in front. In the meantime our infantry was advancing steadily, firmly, and with little noise, for the men hardly replied to the fire of the Afghans. Soon the sharp, peculiar rattle of musketry showed that they were getting a warm reception. "Look to your right! look to your right!" and there, coming into view were the 92nd Highlanders and 2nd Goorkhas charging up the slopes of Sahibdad. There was no hesitation, and the village was carried

at the point of the bayonet, and the line rapidly advanced towards the rugged peaks of the Pir Paimal. Our view was soon closed, for at last the order came for the cavalry to the front. As we were mounting, the body of the gallant Brownlow was carried to the rear in a dooly. The orderly, who accompanied it, was deeply affected at the loss of his Colonel, and the angry bitterness of war filled many a heart. Off we went, past the Horse Artillery battery, and were soon galloping along the Herat road. To our left the sepoy of the 28th Bombay Native Infantry were skirmishing up some hills which overlooked the road. On our right front the high ground at Gundigan was already in possession of the left wing of the 72nd, under Major Guinness. As our four regiments advanced along the road, their lances and accoutrements glittering in the sun, we must have made a formidable show to the Afghans on the slopes of the Pir Paimal pressed hard by our bayonets. Beyond Gundigan we turned to the right to a large space of open ground. Each regiment, as it advanced, rapidly formed up facing the rear of the enemy's position.

If the prisoner's information, referred to afterwards, be correct, it was the sight of our gallant display threatening his rear and line of retreat that decided Ayoub's flight. On our left the videttes of the 3rd Bengal Cavalry appeared busy watching some movements of the enemy in the distance, where, I believe, a number were already retiring. Many of us

thought that at last we were in for a charge, when a ubiquitous staff officer galloped up from the rear, and handed a note to Colonel Mackenzie, who was just then directing our movements. We immediately changed front, and headed again towards Kokeran, on the Herat road, about three miles distant. The ground we were now leaving on our right looked certainly very much enclosed, but we afterwards heard that if, instead of going on towards Kokeran, we had been able to continue in this direction, across the Argundab, we should have saved ourselves nearly two and a half miles of galloping under a terrific sun, and the enemy's loss might have been greater. A deep dyke across our line, which it was impossible to jump, now caused much delay. The regiments had to find their way in single file by two or more narrow tracks, up and down its steep banks. Once across, Kokeran was soon reached, and the shallow Argundab beyond. The heat was now beginning to tell on the horses, and they drank eagerly and hurriedly. Beyond the river, a magnificent level plain, which extended eastwards for twenty miles, must have delighted the heart of the cavalry. It was across this plain, four or five miles beyond, that during the past hour, the large proportion of Ayoub's so-called regulars and cavalry had been flying to reach the safe cover of the hills of the north side; and every delay on our part, and every extra half mile, like in an ordinary race, meant weariness to our horses, but life to the enemy. The whole of our

cavalry, once across the river, made a grand show. The 3rd Bengal Cavalry still led, but their horses had been out eighteen hours on the previous day, and consequently suffered more than those of the other regiments. Riding with my brother doctor of the 3rd Bengal Cavalry, in rear of the two leading regiments, we saw how the heat was telling on the horses. Every three or four hundred yards a charger was down and panting, his rider trying to coax him onwards. In spite of our efforts, the enemy gained the full advantage of their start for life. On the right of the plain, Captain Egerton's squadron of the 3rd Punjab Cavalry charged a number of Afghans just breaking across the plain, and killed upwards of 100. Three of his men were wounded severely, and Lieutenant Baker and three others slightly ; but even here many of the enemy escaped, the horses being too exhausted to follow. One horse of this squadron dropped dead as he afterwards arrived at the edge of the water. Indeed, ten horses of the 3rd Bengal and three of the 3rd Punjab Cavalry died from the effects of this day's heat. Other small parties of the 3rd Punjab Cavalry killed detached portions of the enemy, in which Lieutenant Beresford's and several chargers were wounded. A squadron of the Central India Horse, under Major Gerrard, swept along under the hills on the left of the plain, and delivered a charge home, with telling effect, into a number of the enemy who had all but reached the cover of the hills, and whose comrades opened fire on

our troopers. Those Afghans who had now no chance of escape threw down their arms. The 9th Lancers, following up in reserve, at one time sounded the charge; but it was found that the enemy had deserted their weapons, and their lives were spared. On coming near the ground where Captain Egerton had charged, our few wounded men occupied my closest attention for more than an hour, during which time the cavalry rapidly disappeared in the hazy mirage of the plain, continuing their pursuit eight miles further. It was painful for the men having their severe wounds dressed under a blazing sun with a minimum of water. While attending to them we saw a cloud of dust, and a long glittering line of lances bearing down in our direction. Not knowing that a squadron of the Central India Horse was following with the doolies, we at first mistook them for the enemy, who are exceedingly fond of cutting up stragglers; but, as they approached, we were glad to find that they belonged to our force. About 3 o'clock we reached a delicious pool in the river, and both horses and men drank to their hearts' content. The squadron of the Central India Horse, under Major Buller, halted here with the doolies, the remainder of the cavalry having returned to Kandahar.

The sun was sinking low before we made our final start. The line of country we had to follow to reach the Baba Walli pass was very difficult. Our road or track crossed several dykes and dry canals, and generally only allowed of horses proceeding in a

single line. Soon after leaving the river the troopers in advance brought up a prisoner they had caught, to Major Buller. He turned out to be one of the commissariat coolies attached to General Burrows' force, who had been captured by Ayoub's troops at Maiwand. He was delighted at his escape, and we drew from him information of some interest, as it was obtained while the facts were fresh in his recollection. He declared that about 11 o'clock the imposing sight of our cavalry galloping along the Herat road, and forming up in the plain near Gundigan, decided Ayoub Khan's flight. The sepoy's who guarded him hurried him off, and, not being particularly careful of their charge, he managed to escape. He pointed out a broad dry canal, along which Ayoub and a few mounted followers had made their escape. He declared several times, with much native emphasis, that our cavalry were one hour too late: "*Ek ghunta deri hua ; ek ghunta deri hua.*" He also firmly asserted that Ayoub Khan had two European prisoners in his camp, who were both alive on the morning of the 1st September. It was quite dark when we reached the captured camp at Mazra, held by the 1st Brigade. Here we heard from the men of the 92nd the complete success of the day. One of the wounded with us caused much delay. We slowly worked our way through the grim shadows of the Baba Walli pass ; and, after a most weary journey, finally reached our camp at midnight.

Our last view of the infantry attack was the storm-

ing of the village of Gunda Mulla Sahibdad by the 92nd and 2nd Goorkhas, and the disappearance of the 2nd Brigade into the trees and enclosures towards Gundigan. The village of Sahibdad had been carried so rapidly that numbers of the enemy, unable to effect their escape, remained concealed in the houses, firing on our wounded, and it became necessary to detach two companies of the 2nd Goorkhas to clear them out. Under cover of our batteries the 92nd and the remainder of the Goorkhas advanced towards the corner of the Pir Paimal, having first to carry three dry canals which were strongly held by the enemy. Major White, commanding the advance portion of the 92nd, led on his men, and, being on horseback, he became more especially the object of the enemy's fire. In one of the canals, unable to ride up the far bank, he was compelled to dismount. Here his life was in much peril, the Afghans in their excitement, though quite close, missing him, two men firing their rifles over his shoulders. After clearing the canals the advance was continued towards the enemy's battery, in spite of a deadly musketry fire, from which the 92nd suffered very heavily. Major White certainly bore a charmed life that day, as he rode up to and round the enemy's guns, from which the gunners fled in confusion; and, for his gallantry on this and on other occasions, he has been decorated with the Cross "for Valour." The 2nd Goorkhas (Nepaul Highlanders), now led by Major Beecher, were, in point of dash and bravery, no whit behind

their European comrades in arms. Both these splendid regiments, supported by the 23rd Pioneers, who had worked their way to the front, carried with the bayonet the right flank of the enemy's line of hills. This manœuvre compelled the enemy to forsake the formidable-looking crags, varying from 600 to 800 feet high, extending to the Baba Walli pass, which could never have been carried by a direct assault.

The loss sustained by the 92nd was:—

Killed, Non-Commissioned Officers and
Men 14

Wounded, Lieuts. Menzies and Stewart
severely; Non-Commissioned Officers
and Men, of whom 3 died very soon
after 68

2nd Goorkhas:—

Killed, Non-Commissioned Officers and
Men, 10 ; *Wounded*, 19. 29

23rd Pioneers:—

Killed, 2 ; *Wounded*, 12 14

24th Punjab Native Infantry:—

Killed, 1 ; *Wounded*, 10 11

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While the advance of the 1st Brigade was thus progressing, the 2nd Brigade, on their left, was hotly engaged. Here the leading regiments were, on the extreme left the 72nd Highlanders (Colonel Brownlow), and on their right the 2nd Sikhs, Colonel

Boswell. The ground to be cleared was much enclosed, and many villages and walled orchards gave the enemy excellent positions, which they defended with extreme tenacity; and, under good cover, with safety to themselves, they delivered a raking fire. Owing to these obstructions an unavoidable diversion of the fighting line sometimes took place, which at one time caused the company on the extreme right of the 72nd, commanded by Captain Frome, to lose touch on its left, and to become exposed to a galling fire from a loop-holed wall. This incident cost them the lives of two gallant officers, and, as this book is dedicated to the memory of one of those who fell, the movements of this company are somewhat fully described. After passing an apparently deserted village, the company turned single file into a broad shallow ditch at its far side. Here they came under a severe and concentrated fire from a loop-holed village on their right front, as well as from an adjoining loop-holed orchard-wall, eight feet high, running at right angles to the ditch, which was thereby enfiladed. Bullets whizzed and hissed in all directions, cutting off branches, and knocking chips out of the trees. At once several men were hit, almost the first being Captain Frome, who fell back against the bank of the ditch mortally wounded, his right arm and lungs pierced by a bullet. Lieutenant Egerton then pressed on with his men up the ditch, until his advance was stopped by the loop-holed wall. The entrance to this enclosure was on the far side,

in which direction the 2nd Sikhs were advancing, and it was eventually carried by them. While the 72nd were replying as well as possible to the fire directed at them from the loop-holes, their Colonel, who had been compelled by the nature of the ground to dismount, came up on foot. As Lieutenant Eger-ton rose from the ditch to meet him, the enemy fired a volley. A fatal bullet pierced Colonel Brownlow's neck. He fell to the ground with a deep groan, and within a few minutes, without the slightest appearance of pain or any struggle, died in the arms of his subaltern and orderly, who found it hard to realize that the man beloved by every soldier in the regiment, from the highest to the lowest, was lying dead at their feet. The only words he uttered after receiving his wound were "Hold up my arm." The command of the regiment now devolved on Colonel Stockwell, who rushed his men under the walls, and they fired their rifles into the loop-holes. The enemy, turned on the far side by the 2nd Sikhs, forsook the enclosure, and the line advanced towards Pir Paimal. The left wing of the 72nd, under Major Guinness, supported by the 5th Goorkhas, Colonel Fitzhugh, advanced on the extreme left, clearing the obstructions in their way, and carrying the village of Gundigan and the high ground beyond, which commanded the Herat road, thus opening the way for the cavalry. The 2nd Sikhs, led by Colonel Boswell, advanced in a most gallant way on the right of the 72nd. As both regiments came into the more open ground near

the Pir Paimal, they had to face a heavy fire from the enemy who had massed there, as well as from three guns posted on its north side. The enemy more than once tried to charge; but they were met with the bayonet, a form of persuasion before which Afghans have invariably succumbed. Here it was that Captain Murray, of the 72nd, was shot through the shoulder, and Major Slater, of the 2nd Sikhs, desperately wounded. Finally, the corner of the Pir Paimal was reached, and both brigades wheeled sharp to the right and moved up in rear of what had been the enemy's position. As the two brigades swept up the valley it was perceived that the victory was complete and the enemy in full flight. The shells of our forty-pounders were still coming over the Baba Walli Kotul into the enemy's camp, and in order to stop this fire, previous to our final advance, Captain Straton, the superintendent of signallers, was ordered to ascend a hill on the right, and flash back a message ordering the firing to cease. While proceeding to do this he was shot dead by a wounded Afghan lying concealed behind a rock. His fall was instantly avenged by the signallers with him. The untimely death of so good and indefatigable a soldier was feelingly alluded to in despatches by General Sir F. Roberts. As our troops moved on, the enemy's camp at Mazra, covering nearly a square mile of area, came into view, and the dust of the flying foe was seen on the other side. It was here, I believe, that the want of a cavalry regiment was

experienced. Guns abandoned were standing on the road, the gunners having cut the traces and bolted on the horses. The rout of the enemy was complete. Their camp was found with everything standing. Quantities of rifle ammunition and a large proportion of the loot of our baggage at Maiwand fell into our hands. The loss of the 2nd Brigade was as follows:—

72nd Highlanders:—

<i>Killed</i> , Colonel Brownlow, C.B., Captain Frome ; Non-Commissioned Officers and Men, 7	9
<i>Wounded</i> , Captain Murray and Lieut. Munro severely; Non-Commissioned Officers and Men, 21	23

2nd Sikhs:—

<i>Killed</i> , Non-Commissioned Officers and Men	3
<i>Wounded</i> , Major Slater dangerously; Non - Commissioned Officers and Men, 23	24

5th Goorkhas:—

<i>Killed</i> , 1; <i>Wounded</i> , 2	3
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3rd Sikhs:—

<i>Wounded</i>	6
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2nd Belooches:—

<i>Wounded</i>	1
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In the afternoon the 2nd and 3rd Brigades returned

to Kandahar, leaving the 1st Brigade on outpost duty over the captured camp.

The success of our arms on the 1st September was complete; but it was entirely an infantry fight. The advance of our bayonets was steady and irresistible. Its rapidity made our loss so trifling. Had the enemy stood longer, his loss would have been greater, and more would have fallen to our cavalry in the Argundab.

Of the Kandahar garrison 4,110 of all ranks were under arms, including 91 British officers. By setting free the whole of the Bengal troops they contributed most materially to the success of the day. Their casualties were very trifling. The Bombay Cavalry, under Brigadier Nuttall, pursued the enemy over the Baba Walli pass, and killed beyond Mazra upwards of 100. The total loss of the enemy was reckoned at about 1,200, of which number more than 600 bodies were buried by us. In the hour of victory, as our troops were storming the Pir Paimal, Lieutenant Maclaine, R.H.A., who had been a prisoner in Ayoub Khan's camp since the 27th July, was brutally murdered by the sepoy's guarding him. On the following day the funeral of the British soldiers who had fallen in battle took place in the cemetery to the north of the city. It was a touching and never-to-be-forgotten sight, standing and watching so many brave men placed in their last resting-place; but of all those present, no man's heart was more sorrowful for the dead than that of our gallant General himself,

There remains now little for me to narrate that can interest the general public. After lightly touching on our return to India, over the Kojak pass, through the Bolan, and through Beluchistan, my book closes. On the 3rd September we moved from Kandahar to Kokeran, six miles distant. The heat here seemed as unendurable as it was in Kandahar, though the air was sweeter. Myriads of flies swarmed around our food and helped to make life and eating a burden. This excessive heat continued for many days, until a storm swept over the valley. This storm caused a remarkably sudden rise in the river. Our camp, which had been for health's sake moved to the north bank, was subsequently cut off for many hours from Kandahar. On the morning after the storm, with another officer, I rode into the city, fording the river, then about a foot deep. On our return, about sunset, instead of a gentle stream we found a roaring, surging torrent. Indeed, so strong was the current that my horse, a powerful Australian, was nearly swept off his legs; and in a few hours the river was quite impassable. On the 20th September our return march towards India commenced. On the 30th we reached Quetta. Our marches were as follows:—

		Miles.
Sept. 21.	Kandahar to Mundi Hissar . .	10½
„ 22.	„ Deh-i-Nao . .	8½
„ 23.	„ Saiad Muhammad . .	8
„ 24.	„ Mulla Mustapha . .	25
„ 25.	„ Aktar Khan . .	13

			Miles.
Sept. 26.	Kandahar to Chaman	. . .	19
„ 27.	„ Killa Abdullah	. . .	13
„ 28.	„ Seghi	. . .	15
„ 29.	„ Mehtazai	. . .	20
„ 30.	„ Quettah	. . .	9
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Daily average, 14 miles.

From Mundi Hissar our road deviated from the ordinary route, and we followed an alternative line which had been taken by two cavalry regiments before us.

There is little to note about our journey beyond the ordinary routine of marching. In our second march we passed some large sand-grouse. These beautiful birds, which every cold season migrate to many parts of India, breed on these plains, as well as the plains to the north of the Shutargardan pass, where their eggs were frequently found on the ground. Their plumage bears a wonderful resemblance to the soil they frequent; indeed, unless they have been observed to settle, it is often very difficult when out shooting to discover them. If alarmed, what to the eye of the ordinary observer appear to be some round brown stones on the ground suddenly show signs of life. As they quickly rise in the air, the black and white feathers which form a beautiful circle round the neck, and a striking mark on the breast, together with the white linings of the wings, are exposed to

view; and the half-chuckle, half-whistle, which they utter as they fly with great velocity through the air, can be heard long after they have disappeared from sight, as well as long before they are seen approaching.

The march between Saiad Muhammad and Mulla Mustapha was one of the most trying we had to perform since leaving India. For the last twenty-three miles not a drop of water could be obtained. How the baggage animals performed it as they did is a wonder. On our arrival at the camping-ground, three mules laden with water-skins had to be sent back for the exhausted followers. "Noble," a fine retriever belonging to our adjutant, who had followed the regiment from India, was carried in dead. The long burning marches had crippled his feet, and he was unable to stand the great heat of the day.

The march to Chaman from Aktar Khan, where we skirted the base of the Kojak range, was somewhat pretty; otherwise, a more ghastly accursed-looking country can hardly be imagined.

On September 27th we crossed the Kojak pass, and reached Killa Abdullah on the plain beyond. The road made by our engineers to the summit is a very good one. A small bit of the original track used by our army in 1839 is still visible, and makes one wonder how their guns and huge loads of camp equipage ever reached Kandahar. From Chaman to the summit the distance is four miles; the last half-mile is very steep, the gradient of the ascent being

about one in twelve. The pass itself is 7,380 feet above the sea-level. The fall to Killa Abdullah, ten miles distant, is 2,242 feet. The gradient of the first mile of the descent is one in eleven. At one spot the road runs through a terribly steep cleft in the rock, which only just admits of a gun-carriage passing through. During the descent we saw numbers of chicore, the red-legged mountain partridge.

The climate of Quettah, which stands 5,515 feet above the sea-level, is most delightful at this time of the year. The Residency is a charming house, and other bungalows are springing up.

We now heard that our corps was the cavalry regiment selected to accompany General Macgregor's force, organized to punish the Marris, a powerful hill-tribe who had risen in arms after the defeat of our troops at Maiwand.

After one day's enjoyable halt we turned our heads towards the Bolan pass, and reached Nari Bank, close to Sibi, our rendezvous, in six days. The marches are as follows:—

			Miles.
1.	Quettah to Sir-i-ab	. . .	8
2.	„ Dozan	. . .	24
3.	„ Bibi Nani	. . .	21
4.	„ South Kirta	. . .	8
5.	„ Pir Chowki	. . .	16
6.	„ Nari Bank	. . .	14
			—
	Total	. . .	91

About twenty-five miles after leaving Quettah, the road enters the hot barren hills which form the Bolan pass. This pass is divided into the Upper and Lower Bolan. After a circuitous route of more than fifty miles, the pass terminates at Pir Chowki near Dadur. During the last march the river Bolan has to be forded a great number of times. The water of the river is very clear, and occasionally beautiful pools are met with where good sport is obtained with the rod. After leaving Pir Chowki we struck the line of rail, our road to Nari Bank running parallel with it. Here we once again saw a train puffing along towards Dadur, conveying Sir Alfred Lyall towards Quettah and Kandahar.

At Nari Bank we halted for four days, in a very foul encamping ground, close to a siding on the railway. From here, daily, fortunate regiments were being rapidly carried away towards India. Most of us visited Sibi, about four miles distant, which boasts of two or three shops and a refreshment stall at the railway station. But surely, of all the horrible stations to be met with on our frontier, Sibi must bear the palm. The heat at this season of the year, October, was most trying. In our tents the thermometer daily rose to 107°. What the mercury reached in the summer it was unpleasant to anticipate. On the 11th October the 3rd Sikhs arrived from Kandahar. On the following day we marched for the Marri country through the Nari gorge, and on the 13th October joined Sir Charles Macgregor's force,

halted in a fine plain at Babur Kuch. The troops with which he completely traversed the Marri country, under the guidance of our political officer, Captain Jennings, R.E., were seasoned soldiers, all of them having marched from Kabul. They were as follows: 11-9 Royal Artillery, European Mountain Battery, Major Douglas; 3rd Punjab Cavalry, Lieut.-Colonel Vivian; 2-60th Rifles, Major Byron; 5th Goorkhas, Major Sym; 2nd Sikhs, Major Pratt; 3rd Sikhs, Colonel Noel Money; 4th Goorkhas, Lieut.-Colonel Rowcroft. At Quot-Mundai, a squadron of cavalry, under Major Anderson, and the 2nd Sikhs, were detached to hold this post. We halted here for two days, and obtained excellent sport in the river, both with fly and artificial bait. On the 17th October we marched for Thull, which was reached on the 22nd. At Spintangai we crossed a terribly steep pass for cavalry and baggage animals. The last march into Thull, a distance of twenty-one miles, was over one of the most difficult roads I have ever seen. We first crossed five or six small but steep passes, and finally entered a succession of rocky gorges, with narrow precipitous sides. In one place the rocks converged so, that a mule with baggage could only just clear the sides. Once through this pass we entered on a splendid plain, which the rear-guard did not reach until 10 o'clock the next day.

Having kept no notes of the circuitous route we afterwards followed, through a mountainous and sometimes unexplored country, I can give no description of

a most difficult undertaking. With the exception of the fine plain, in which Thull and the extensive forest at Chotiali are situated, and one other plain that we subsequently entered after crossing a frightful pass, we wandered through barren hills, meeting few signs of man. In thirty-three days' marching, besides Quot-Mundai, Thull, Momud, and Kahan, comparatively large habitations for such a country, we only saw six small villages, all deserted. Our expedition, however, was successful. The chiefs of the offending tribes, who had done an inconceivable amount of damage and reckless mischief to the wonderful railway, stock, and buildings, we had commenced to Quettah, *via* Hurnai, tendered their submission to General Macgregor, and paid up the greater part of the heavy fine levied on them. Yet it now seems curious that, after the Maiwand disaster, we should have abandoned, to the mercy of these hill tribes, an alternative route to Quettah, which abounded in water, and was well stocked with supplies of all kinds, as well as valuable railway stores and plant. The fine realised can never repay the damage committed by these savages, who, in their mad rage, endeavoured even to destroy a railway engine by setting fire to the sleepers they had piled around it. Yet these men had for years received only kindness at our hands, as well as subsidies of money. In consequence of the submission of the chiefs we saw no fighting, and not a shot was fired by us in anger. Our greatest enemy was want of forage, and scarcity

of water, which generally abounded so in saline matters, that it produced a great deal of sickness. After leaving Kahan, which was almost entirely deserted, we crossed the Shum plain, which is covered with fossils. On the 14th of November we cleared the hills near the outpost of Hurrund, and, with more pleasure than can be expressed, reached, on the 18th November 1880, the frontier station of Dera-Ghazi-Khan.

APPENDIX.

SUMMARY OF THE CAUSES OF OUR FIRST TWO KABUL WARS.

IN the year 1831, Captain Alexander Burnes, with the consent of the English Governor-General, Lord William Bentinck, received permission to travel in Central Asia. He reached Kabul, *viâ* Peshawar and the Kyber Pass, and was received with courtesy and attention by the Amir Dost Mahomed, the father of Shere Ali. After staying some months in Kabul, he crossed the Hindu Kush to Bokhara, and eventually reached Persia in safety, from whence he returned to Calcutta.

In 1835 he was ordered by Lord Auckland to proceed on a commercial visit to Kabul, which now brings us to the practical cause of our outbreak with Dost Mahomed. Writing from Kabul, on the 19th of June 1835, he says: "We are in a mess here. The Emperor of Russia has sent an envoy to offer Dost Mahomed money to fight Runjeet Singh. I could not believe my eyes and ears; but Captain Vichovich, for that is the agent's name, arrived with a blazing letter, three feet long, and sent immediately to pay his respects to myself. I, of course, received him and asked him to dinner. This is not the best of it. The Amir came over to me sharp, and offered to do as I liked—kick him out or anything; but I should be too much in fear of Vattel to do any such thing; and since he was so

friendly to me, said I, 'Give me the letters the agent has brought.' All of which he surrendered sharp, and I sent an express off at once to my Lord Auckland with a confidential letter to the Governor-General himself, bidding him look what his predecessors had brought upon him, and telling him that after this I knew not what might happen, and it was now a neck-and-neck race between Russia and ourselves, and, if his Lordship would hear reason, he would forthwith send agents to Bokhara, Herat, Kandahar, and Kunduz, not forgetting Scinde. How that pill will go down I know not, but I knew my duty too well to be silent."

Dost Mahomed, who had just lost Peshawar to the Sikhs, now wished to know what the English would do for him. Burnes' authority was limited. He could only insist against an alliance between Afghanistan and Persia and Russia.

Lord Auckland would appear to not have acted with any decision; all he offered the ruler of Kabul was to restrain the Sikhs from attacking Kabul. Dost Mahomed was our friend before; but now that he could gain no benefit from the English Government, he decided to try what the Russian alliance would do for him. Vichovich was received daily, and paraded in public with the Kabul Amir, while Burnes was given the cold shoulder. He, therefore, returned to Peshawar, and was recalled to Lahore.

In consequence of these Russian proclivities of Dost Mahomed, our army advanced in 1837, *viâ* the Bolan and Kandahar, and eventually, after storming Kelat-i-Gilzai, and Ghuzni, reached Kabul and placed our own myrmidon Shah Sujah on his throne. For the two succeeding years the British flag waved over Kabul, and the British nation lived and thrived in peace with all around.

On the 2nd of November 1841, Sir Alexander Burnes, who resided in the city, was murdered by Ghazi, or religious fanatics. On the 25th of December following Sir William MacNaughten was treacherously assassinated by Mahomed Akbar Khan, who, with true Afghan baseness, shot our envoy

with the pistols received from him as a present only the day before.

Disaster followed disaster, and on a bitter day, January 6th, 1842, the remains of our army left the cantonments of Sherpur, and by the 15th day of the same month, with the exception of prisoners and hostages, Dr. Bryden rode into Jellalabad the only survivor of our once victorious army.

In September of the same year, Pollock, with an avenging force, joined by the gallant garrison of Jellalabad—who had unassisted, the day before his arrival, defeated the large force Akbar Khan had brought against them—marched up the Kyber, and, after joining hands with the troops sent from Kandahar, destroyed the chief bazaar and returned to India.

In 1878, the important influence of Russia in Afghanistan the Russian Embassy being actually present and received with honours in Kabul, followed by the refusal of the Amir to receive our envoy, Sir Neville Chamberlain, who had actually started from Peshawar, but was compelled to return, is again the practical cause of the second Kabul war.

Our armies advanced and defeated the Afghan troops at Ali Musjid in the Kyber, the Peiwar Kotul, in the Kuram valley, and at Kandahar. The Amir fled to Turkestan, where he died in February 1879.

In May 1879 a treaty was drawn up between the British Government and his son and successor, Yakub Khan. On September 3rd the British Residency was attacked, our envoy and the British officers who accompanied him, as well as his escort, with the exception of five, were murdered.

Immediately on the receipt of the news of this second phase of Afghan treachery, a small army, under the command of Major-General Sir F. Roberts, marched over the Shutargardan pass, and on the 6th of October signally defeated the mutinous troops on the heights of Charasiab, six miles from Kabul, and the city fell into our hands, as well as large quantities of ammunition. Unlike Pollock's policy, however, we spared Kabul, and camped our army in the cantonments of Sherpur.

On December 8th our little army, threatened on all sides by large bodies of Afghans, burning with hatred to the kaffir, and urged on by a patriotic though fanatical priest (Mushk-i-Alum, "Scent of the world"), moved out to fight; but, in spite of some brilliant successes and feats of arms, we were compelled to retire within cantonments.

On the morning of the 23rd of December 1879 the enemy, who hoped that our day was over as in 1842, hearing of the arrival of General Gough's relieving brigade on the previous day at Lattaband, made a futile assault on our position, which was easily repulsed, and during the night all fled to their homes; and on our troops marching out in the morning, the city and all the villages surrounding the cantonments were completely deserted.

GUNDAMUK TREATY.

TREATY between the British Government and His Highness Muhammad Yakub Khan, Amir of Afghanistan and its dependencies, concluded at Gundamuk on the 26th of May 1879, by His Highness the Amir Muhammad Yakub Khan on his own part, and on the part of the British Government by Major P. L. N. Cavagnari, C.S.I., political officer on special duty, in virtue of full powers vested in him by the Right Honourable Edward Robert Lytton, Bulwer Lytton, Baron Lytton of Knebworth, and a Baronet, Grand Master of the Most Exalted Order of the Star of India, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, Grand Master of the Order of the Indian Empire, Viceroy and Governor-General of India.

The following articles of a treaty for the restoration of peace and amicable relations, have been agreed upon between the British Government and His Highness Muhammad Yakub Khan, Amir of Afghanistan and its dependencies:—

ARTICLE I.

From the day of the exchange of the ratifications of the present Treaty there shall be perpetual peace and friendship between the British Government on the one part, and His Highness the Amir of Afghanistan and its dependencies, and his successors, on the other.

ARTICLE II.

His Highness the Amir of Afghanistan and its dependencies engages, on the exchange of the ratifications of this Treaty, to publish a full and complete amnesty, absolving all his subjects from any responsibility for intercourse with the British forces during the war, and to guarantee and protect all persons of whatever degree from any punishment or molestation on that account.

ARTICLE III.

His Highness the Amir of Afghanistan and its dependencies agrees to conduct his relations with foreign states in accordance with the advice and wishes of the British Government. His Highness the Amir will enter into no engagement with foreign states, and will not take up arms against any foreign state, except with the concurrence of the British Government. On these conditions the British Government will support the Amir against any foreign aggression with money, arms, or troops, to be employed in whatsoever manner the British Government may judge best for this purpose. Should British troops at any time enter Afghanistan for the purpose of repelling foreign aggression, they will return to their stations in British territory as soon as the object for which they entered has been accomplished.

ARTICLE IV.

With a view to the maintenance of the direct and intimate relations now established between the British Government and His Highness the Amir of Afghanistan, and for the better protection of the frontiers of His Highness's dominions, it is agreed that a British representative shall reside at Kabul, with a suitable escort, in a place of residence appropriate to his rank and dignity. It is also agreed that the British Government shall have the right to depute British agents with suitable escorts to the Afghan frontiers, whensoever this may be considered necessary by the British Government in the interests of both states on the occurrence of any important external fact. His Highness the Amir of Afghanistan may, on his part, depute an agent to reside at the Court of His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of India, and at such other places in British India as may be similarly agreed upon.

ARTICLE V.

His Highness the Amir of Afghanistan and its dependencies guarantees the personal safety and honourable treatment

of British agents within his jurisdiction; and the British Government on its part, undertakes that its agents shall never in any way interfere with the internal administration of His Highness's dominions.

ARTICLE VI.

His Highness the Amir of Afghanistan and its dependencies undertakes, on behalf of himself and his successors, to offer no impediment to British subjects peacefully trading within his dominions, so long as they do so with the permission of the British Government, and in accordance with such arrangements as may be mutually agreed upon from time to time between the two Governments.

ARTICLE VII.

In order that the passage of trade between the territories of the British Government and His Highness the Amir of Afghanistan may be open and uninterrupted, His Highness the Amir of Afghanistan agrees to use his best endeavours to ensure the protection of traders, and to facilitate the transit of goods along the well-known customary roads of Afghanistan. These roads shall be improved and maintained in such manner as the two Governments may decide to be most expedient for the general convenience of traffic, and under such financial arrangements as may be mutually determined upon between them. The arrangements made for the maintenance and security of the aforesaid roads, for the settlement of the duties to be levied upon merchandise carried over these roads, and for the general protection and maintenance and development of trade with and through the dominions of His Highness, will be stated in a separate commercial treaty, to be concluded within one year, due regard being given to the state of the country.

ARTICLE VIII.

With a view to facilitate communication between the allied Governments, and to aid and develop intercourse and com-

mercial relations between the two countries, it is hereby agreed that a line of telegraph from Kuram to Kabul shall be constructed by, and at the cost of, the British Government; and the Amir of Afghanistan hereby undertakes to provide for the proper protection of this telegraph line.

ARTICLE IX.

In consideration of the renewal of a friendly alliance between the two states, which has been attested and secured by the foregoing articles, the British Government restores to His Highness the Amir of Afghanistan and its dependencies, the towns of Kandahar and Jellalabad, with all the territory now in possession of the British armies, excepting the districts of Kuram, Pishin, and Sibi. His Highness the Amir of Afghanistan and its dependencies, on his part, agrees that the districts of Kuram, Pishin, and Sibi, according to the limits of the schedule annexed,* shall remain under the protection and administrative control of the British Government; that is to say, the aforesaid districts shall be treated as assigned districts, and shall not be considered as permanently severed from the limits of the Afghan kingdom. The revenues of these districts, after deducting the charges of the civil administration, shall be paid to His Highness the Amir. The British Government will retain in their own hands the control of the Kyber and Mietini passes, which lie between the Peshawar and Jellalabad districts, and of all relations with the independent tribes of the territory directly connected with these passes.

ARTICLE X.

For the further support of His Highness the Amir in the recovery and maintenance of his legitimate authority, and in consideration of the efficient fulfilment in their entirety of the

* Omitted,

engagements stipulated by the foregoing articles, the British Government agrees to pay to His Highness the Amir, and to his successors an annual subsidy of six lacs of rupees.

Done at Gundamuk this 26th of May 1879, corresponding with the 4th day of the month of Jamadi-us-sani, 1296 A.H.

(Signed) **AMIR MUHAMMAD**
 YAKUB KHAN. (L.S.)
 N. CAVAGNARI, Major (L.S.)
 Political Officer on
 Special Duty.
 LYTTON. (L.S.)

'This Treaty was ratified by His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of India, at Simla, on Friday, the 30th of May 1879.

(Signed) **A. C. LYALL,**
 Secretary to the Government of
 India, Foreign Department.

RUSSIAN CORRESPONDENCE FOUND AT
KABUL.

*Letter from General Von Kaufmann to Shere Ali, dated
June 1878.*

Be it known to you that in these days the relations between the British Government and ours with regard to your kingdom require deep consideration. As I am unable to communicate my opinion verbally to you, I have deputed my agent, Major-General Stolieteff. This gentleman is a near friend of mine, and performed excellent services in the late Russo-Turkish war, by which he earned favour of the Emperor. The Emperor has always had a regard for him. He will inform you of all that is hidden in my mind. I hope you will pay great attention to what he says, and believe him as you would myself, and that after due consideration you will give him your reply; meanwhile be it known to you that your union and friendship with the Russian Government will be beneficial to the latter and still more so to you. The advantages of a close alliance with the Russian Government will be permanently evident.

This friendly letter is written by the Governor-General of Turkistan and Adjutant-General to the Emperor, Von Kaufmann.

Tashkand, Jamadi-ul-Akhar 1295 (June 1878).

*Letter from Shere Ali to General Von Kaufmann, dated 23rd
August 1878.*

After compliments.—Your friendly letter of the 10th Safar 1295 H.* (sent by the hands of Nasir Khan), giving an account of the battles that have been fought between the Russians and the Turks, as well as of the events which have occurred at

* (?) 31st January (18th February) 1878.

Kashgar, and inquiring regarding the coolness which has taken place between the British Government and the God-granted Government of Afghanistan, reached me on Tuesday, the 12th Rabi-us-Sani 1295 H. (16th April 1878). I have fully understood its contents from the beginning to the end. In these days, as I wished to give Nasir Khan leave to depart, I was going to reply to your letter, but by a happy chance a mission, under the command of General-Major Stolieteff, was deputed by His Imperial Majesty the Emperor to this Court. The General delivered to me at the first interview your two friendly letters, which he brought from you from Tashkand. I have fully understood the contents of the letters, as well as the verbal representations of the above-named General, who has your full confidence as well as that of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor. He has reduced to writing the verbal representations, the object of which was to strengthen the friendly relations between the illustrious Government of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor and the God-granted Government of Afghanistan, and made it over to me. I have communicated my replies to your letters to the said General, who will state them to you verbally. He will soon leave this and wait upon you, and state all matters in detail.

With a view to show honour and respect to the General, I have appointed Kamnab Mirza Muhammad Hassan Khan and Gholam Haidar Khan, my Peshkidmat, to accompany him as far as Tashkand.

*Letter from General Stolieteff to Afghan Foreign Minister, dated
21st September 1878.*

Thank God I reached Tashkand safely, and at an auspicious moment paid my respects to the Viceroy (Yaroni Padsha means half king). I am trying day and night to gain our objects, and hope I shall be successful.

I am starting to see the Emperor to-day, in order to inform His Majesty personally of our affairs. If God pleases, every-

thing that is necessary will be done and affirmed. I hope that those who want to enter the gate of Kabul from the east will see that the door is closed; then, please God, they will tremble. I hope you will give my respects to His Highness the Amir. May God make his life long and increase his wealth! May you remain in good health, and know that the protection of God will arrange our affairs.

*Letter from General Stolieteff to Wazir Shah Muhammad Khan,
dated 8th October 1878.*

First of all, I hope you will be kind enough to give my respects to the Amir. May God make his life long and increase his wealth! I shall always remember his royal hospitality. I am busy day and night in his affairs, and thank God my labours have not been without result. The great Emperor is a true friend of the Amir's and of Afghanistan, and His Majesty will do whatever he may think necessary. Of course you have not forgotten what I told you, that the affairs of kingdoms are like a country which has many mountains, valleys, and rivers. One who sits on a high mountain can see these things well. By the power and order of God there is no empire equal to that of our great Emperor. May God make his life long. Therefore, whatever our Government advises you, you should give ear to it. I tell you the truth that our Government is wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove. There are many things which you cannot understand, but our Government understands them well. It often happens that a thing which is unpleasant at first is regarded as a blessing afterwards. Now, my kind friend, I inform you that the enemy of your famous religion wants to make peace with you through the Kaiser (Sultan) of Turkey. Therefore, you should look to your brothers who live on the other side of the river. If God stirs them up, and gives the sword of fight into their hands, then go on in the name of God (Bismilla); otherwise you should be as a serpent; make peace openly, and in secret

prepare for war; and when God reveals His order to you, declare yourself. It will be well when the envoy of your enemy wants to enter the country, if you send an able emissary, possessing the tongue of a serpent and full of deceit, to the enemy's country, so that he may, with sweet words, perplex the enemy's mind, and induce him to give up the intention of fighting with you. My kind friend, I entrust you to the protection of God. May God be the protector of the Amir's kingdom, and may trembling fall upon the limbs of your enemies. Amen.

Write to me soon and send the letter to the capital. Please write in Arabic characters, so that I may be able to read your letter.

*Letter from Shere Ali to General Von Kaufmann, dated
October 1878.*

After compliments.—The following are the events that occurred here lately. After the departure of General Stolieteff, the ambassador of the illustrious Government, from the capital to Tashkand, the officers of the British Government have become audacious and have openly assumed a hostile attitude towards the people of this God-granted Government, and girded their loins to cause them mischief—facts of which you may have been made aware by letter from Pulkawnick.* As I now write they have advanced as far as Khyber, the frontier of the God-granted territory of Afghanistan. They have completed their preparations for an expedition. It now only remains for us to encounter each other. In short, matters have now passed the stage of temporising, that is to say, they are proving aggressors. It is, therefore, the bounden duty of the officers of this God-granted Government to protect, according to their power and ability, the frontier and the lives and

* General Rozgonoff, a member of General Stolieteff's mission, who remained at Kabul,

property (of the people), but the fire of this disturbance is not likely to be extinguished; and soon after this friendly letter reaches you you will hear that the British and the Afghan Governments have got involved in war. Relying upon your friendship, I expect that you will bestow your particular attention on the subject, and lend me your friendly aid in any way you think proper. I beg to enclose with this friendly letter copy of a cordial letter sent to His Imperial Majesty the Czar for your perusal. Although it was befitting and necessary to forward the Emperor's letter by the hands of a respectable and confidential agent, yet, as there was no time to lose, it was sent by the chapars sowars (mounted couriers). No doubt the excuse is quite apparent and reasonable.

Letter (enclosed in above No. 33) from Shere Ali, to the Emperor of Russia, dated 9th October 1878.

After compliments.—Whereas in accordance with the requirements of friendship and amity it is necessary to acquaint Your Imperial Majesty with the occurrence of certain incidents and events, I beg to write that since the day the doors of friendly correspondence have been opened between Your Majesty's powerful Government and this God-granted Government, and friendly communications have passed between them, the hearts of the officers of the British Government have been severely hurt. For a long time they have been annoying and harassing the officials of this God-granted Government, and many untoward acts, which are inconsistent with the forms of neighbourhood, have proceeded from them. The fire of their malice and device had not yet been put down when Your Majesty's mission arrived at my capital, Kabul, and strung the pearls of friendly sentiments on the thread of statement. This circumstance aggravated their opposition and enmity. After the arrival of Your Majesty's mission they assumed a hostile attitude, both publicly and privately, and behaved improperly, and showed hostility in many different ways. First, they proceeded to Jamrud, a place on my frontier, with a large number of

followers (whom they called the escort, *lit.* camp), ostensibly on a mission, and in reality with the intention of causing mischief to this God-granted Government, and wished to pass on to the capital without permission, and satisfy their desire to insult Your Majesty's mission. As the officers and commandants of the outposts of this God-granted Empire smote the breasts of their desire (request) with the hand of rejection, saying that to form friendship by force and to send a mission with such a crowd and uproar was contrary to the custom and usage of all nations, they returned to Peshawur, and are now busy organizing expeditions to Afghanistan, and have sent proclamations of war to every nook and corner, and are using their utmost endeavours to sap the foundation of the Afghan kingdom. Notwithstanding all this, the officers of this God-granted Government have as yet done nothing unfriendly or hostile, and have considered it far from prudence and caution to begin the first act of hostility. But it is a fact that the more we give in the more hostile they become. The British Government this day stands in the same position with regard to the Afghan Government as it did about forty years ago, viz. in those days an ambassador of the illustrious Russian Government and an agent of the British Government had arrived in Afghanistan. The late Amir, led by his sound judgment, preferred the friendship of Your Imperial Majesty to that of the English Government, and Afghanistan in consequence suffered what it suffered. In short, the English are determined upon war, and the subjects of this God-granted Government will defend their frontier, their lives, and property to the best of their ability. Let us see what Providence wills to result from this war, and what He will bring to pass.

The above is the unqualified statement of the situation of affairs from the beginning to the end, which I write for the information of Your Imperial Majesty. I hope Your Majesty will kindly lend me friendly assistance befitting the greatness of Your Imperial Majesty for the maintenance of the tranquillity of Afghanistan.

Letter from Shere Ali to General Stolieteff, dated October 1878.

After compliments.—During the time you stayed in the capital and had friendly conversations, you learnt the evil intentions of the English towards Afghanistan, and since you left for Tashkand, their inimical disposition has been getting strong day by day, and they have recently assumed publicly and openly a hostile attitude towards the Afghans. You have already been made perfectly aware of the state of affairs by the letters of Pulkawnick.* I have received no news from you for some time past. Matters have now passed temporising, and war is imminent. They are the aggressors. Had it been in the power of the officers of this God-granted Government they would have avoided the rupture by temporising, but it now remains to be seen what will appear from behind the curtain. I lost no time in communicating the above circumstances to His Imperial Majesty the Czar and to General Von Kaufmann, and now I beg to inform you of the same, so that you may be pleased to render such friendly assistance as may be thought proper, and as may become the grandeur of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor.

Letter from Shere Ali to General Von Kaufmann, dated 4th November 1878.

After compliments.—Your two friendly letters, one dated 21st September (1st October) 1878, corresponding to 4th Shawal, 1295 H., intimating that Pulkawnick Karadikoff having been appointed to travel in Persia, left Tashkand and had reached Mazar-i-Sharif *viâ* Maimana, on his way to Persia, and expressing your hopes that the governors of Afghanistan will not withhold their help from the said Pulkawnick; and the other letter, dated 3rd (15th) October 1878, corresponding to 19th

* General Rozgonoff.

Shawal, intimating the appointment of Pulkawnick Matyoff with a certain number of followers to travel in Transoxiana, and expressing your hopes that the governors of the Government of Afghanistan will help the said Matyoff in his travels, reached me on the 25th Shawal (22nd October) and the 4th Zikadah (31st October) respectively. I read them and mastered their contents. According to your recommendation I have issued strict orders to the governors of this God-granted Government to the effect that they should pass on Pulkawnick Karadikoff through Afghanistan to the borders of Persia, and treat him with great respect and consideration. In the like manner they will show respect and hospitality to Pulkawnick Matyoff and his followers, who intended to visit Kulab, Hissar, Badakhshan, and Kafiristan. But you should warn him that Kafiristan, being the country of the savages and mountaineers, who are like beasts in habit and devoid of reason, is not a place to travel in. He should be on his guard. No Afghan has ever visited this country, nor would anyone venture to do so. It now rests with you to do whatever you like regarding his travels. Out of friendship, I beg to inform you that owing to the above obstacles (dangers) travelling in Kafiristan requires great precaution.

*Letter from General Von Kaufmann to Shere Ali, dated
4th November 1878.*

After compliments.—Be it known to you that your letter, dated 12th Shawal, reached me at Tashkand on the 16th (30th) October, i.e. 3rd Zikadah, and I understood its contents. I have telegraphed an abstract of your letter to the address of the Emperor, and have sent the letter itself, as also that addressed to General Stolieteff, by post to Livadia, where the Emperor now is. I am informed on good authority that the English want to come to terms with you; and as a friend I advise you to make peace with them if they offer it.

*Letter from Shere Ali to General Von Kaufmann, dated
20th November 1878.*

After compliments.—Your friendly letter, dated 22nd October (4th November) 1878, corresponding to 8th Zikadah, 1295 H., sent by the hands of the officials of this God-granted Government, has been perused by me. I have mastered the contents thereof. Before the arrival of the same letter, one from the officers of the British Government containing very severe, harsh, and hostile expressions has reached me. I read it and made it over to Rosgonoff, the envoy of the illustrious Government, and he sent a Russian translation of the same to you. While I was writing a reply to the letter in question, answering all the queries, your letter reached me. You have written that I should make peace with them.* I know from the conduct and manners of the British Government that they will never withdraw from their enmity towards this God-granted Government. They will not listen to any overtures for reconciliation and the removal of the misunderstanding, although no shots have as yet been exchanged. I have, however, according to your friendly advice given me by command of His Imperial Majesty, made overtures for peace,† that is to say, I have sent a friendly reply to their letter, containing civil and polite expressions, copy of which I beg to send herewith, so that you may read it and learn the facts of the case. What the British Government intends to do with regard to the invasion of Afghanistan remains to be seen. I trust that you will gratify me from time to time with an account of your good health.

*Letter from General Von Kaufmann to Shere Ali, dated
26th November 1878 (o.s.).*

After compliments.—I was much pleased to receive your letter, dated 24th Zikadah 1295 (20th November 1878), and to

* *Lit.* should make over a branch of the tree of peace to them.

† *Lit.* given them a branch of the tree of peace.

hear of your good health. I have also received a copy of the letter which you sent to the Governor-General. May God be pleased with you. The British Ministers have given a pledge to our ambassador in London that they will not interfere with the independence of Afghanistan. I am directed by His Majesty the Emperor to communicate this news to you, and then after forming friendship to go to His Majesty. I intend to go to the Russian capital after I have arranged the affairs of this country (Turkistan). As I do not consider it advisable to keep your trusted officials, whom you are in want of, here any more, I send Muhammad Hassan Khan Kamnab (Deputy Governor) and Gholam Haidar Khan, with two officers, back to you. I hope you will consider me a well-wisher of your kingdom, and write to me now and then. I have given instructions that, until my return, every letter of yours which they receive at Turkistan should be forwarded to the capital. Your good fortune is a cause of happiness to me, and if any troubles come upon you I shall be grieved. Some presents have been sent by me through Mirza Muhammad Hassan, Kamnab; perhaps they may be accepted.

*Letter from General Von Kaufmann to General Rosgonoff,
dated December 1878.*

The Ameer knows perfectly well that it is impossible for me to assist him with troops in winter. Therefore, it is necessary that war should not be commenced at this unreasonable time. If the English, in spite of the Ameer's exertions to avoid the war, commence it, you must then take leave of the Ameer and start for Tashkand, because your presence in Afghanistan in winter is useless. Moreover, at such a juncture as the commencement of war in Afghanistan you ought to come here and explain the whole thing to me, so that I may communicate it to the Emperor. This will be of great benefit to Afghanistan and to Russia.

Letter from Shere Ali to the Envoy sent by him with General Stolieteff (Mirza Muhammad Hassan Khan), dated 8th December 1878.

After compliments.—The following is the state of affairs in this place. The English have in no way ceased to carry out their intention of interfering with Afghanistan. I have addressed a letter to the British Government, in which, in accordance with the friendly advice my friend General Kaufmann, the Governor-General of Turkistan, gave me by the command of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor, I have made overtures for peace ; but they took no notice of it, and attacked my Thannadars at Ali Musjid with twenty regiments. There were five regiments under my Thannadars.. Many were killed and wounded on both sides in the fight. Seven or eight days after this occurrence they came in great force upon my Thannadars stationed at the Kurram cantonments. At first they suffered a defeat, but the second time they defeated my troops, and there was some loss on either side. The number of killed and wounded on both sides was much greater here than at Ali Musjid. In short, matters have now culminated in fighting, and they expect to take Afghanistan in a short time. Now as this is the time for His Imperial Majesty the Emperor to lend friendly assistance, I have addressed a letter to my kind friend, the Governor of Turkistan, requesting him not to withhold the aid of troops at this time of need, in accordance with the requirements of the friendship between the two Governments, and not to defer the aid till some other time, but to send to Afghan Turkistan the 32,000 troops of Tashkand which General Stolieteff told me in your presence were ready and would be despatched whenever I required them. I allow you to urge both day and night the Russian Government of Turkistan for aid, and do not delay in this matter.

*Letter from Shere Ali to General Von Kaufmann, dated
8th December 1878.*

After compliments.—You have been informed from time to time by my letters, as well as by those from the Ambassador of the illustrious Russian Government who was in Kabul, of the acts of enmity evinced by the British Government towards this God-granted Government. Lately the enmity of the British Government has reached such a pitch, that although I, according to your friendly advice given me by the command of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor, sent them a reply to their last letter, and made overtures for peace therein,* yet they have vigorously attacked with twenty regiments my five regiments stationed at Ali Musjid under the command of my Thannadar. Many lives were lost on both sides, and many were wounded. A few days after the battle of Ali Musjid they attacked with an overwhelming force my Thannadars stationed at Kurram, and a severe fight took place. The battle continued for two days. At first they (the English) suffered a defeat, but afterwards they defeated my Thannadars. There was a greater loss sustained in this battle on either side than in that of Ali Musjid, both in killed and wounded. Under these circumstances, and at the advice of the gentry of Afghanistan, I sent the families of the nobles to Turkistan, and have also ordered all the people of Afghanistan to send their families to Kohistan and prepare themselves to fight. Although the British officers have received my letters, yet they have not ceased to show their open enmity. Their troops are pouring in with a view to take Afghanistan, and they expect to bring the war to a close in a short time and take the capital, Kabul. My friend, I therefore beg to acquaint you with what I have in my mind, and beg to write that as there exists perfect concord between the illustrious Government of His Imperial Majesty the Em-

* *Lit.* given them a branch of the tree of peace.

peror and the God-granted Government of Afghanistan, both on account of the old friendship and the recent alliance concluded through General Stolieteff on the part of His Imperial Majesty, should any harm or injury, which God forbid, befall the Afghan Government, the dust of blame will certainly settle on the skirt of His Imperial Majesty's Government. As the interests of the two Governments are identical, I expect, as a matter of course, aid in men from you. I hope that you will collect all troops available under your command at Tashkand, and despatch them to Afghan Turkistan. Again I write to you that General Rosgonoff, the Envoy of the illustrious Government, stated that he had received an order from you that when matters got worse between the English and the Afghans he should take leave from me and depart for Turkistan, and, consequently, he asked for leave, but I did not think it advisable to give him leave at present, for the sake of the mutual welfare of the two Governments and for certain other considerations.

*Letter from Shere Ali to General Von Kaufmann, dated
22nd December 1878.*

After compliments.—Previous to this, I informed your Excellency that the troops of the British Government had advanced on the territory of Afghanistan; that actions had been fought between us and them; that they paid no attention to the communications which I had addressed to them in accordance with the friendly advice which you gave me by the command of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor, viz. that I should make peace with them. I hope you have learned all the facts referred to above. After I had despatched the letter to you all the gentry and chiefs of Afghanistan waited upon me, and represented that the English had no other object but that we should not cultivate friendly relations with the illustrious Russian Government; that we should not let the envoy of that Government visit our country; but that these (proposals) were

not feasible now, as that illustrious Government notwithstanding its greatness, had held out its hand of friendship; that we had renewed our friendship with it on a stronger basis than before; that we are now firm and strong in our friendship and amity; that if we all be ruined as we were forty years ago, nothing would disturb the basis of our alliance with that Government; that they were all of opinion that I should start for St. Petersburg, the capital of His Majesty the Emperor, in person, and have a congress* held there to inquire into, and settle, my cause with the English, after asking them what right they had to advance on Afghanistan. They added that, God willing, my journey to Russia will produce many advantages, and that the right will not be overlooked in the capital of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor. Conformably to the advice of my well-wishers, having resolved upon visiting St. Petersburg, I have left my son, Sirdar Yakub Khan, in charge of all my troops, chiefs, and the property of the State, entrusted him with the civil and military government, and departed with a small number of officials for my destination. The above is the state of affairs, which I have written for Your Excellency's information, who feels sympathy for the Afghan Government, and is a kind friend and the regulator of this God-granted Government.

*Letter from General Von Kaufmann to Shere Ali, dated
2nd January 1879.*

I have received your friendly letter, dated 13th Zel Hijja (8th December 1878). In that letter you asked me to send you as many troops as could be got ready. I have written to you a letter to the effect that the Emperor, on account of your troubles, had communicated with the British Government, and that the Russian Ambassador at London had obtained a promise from the British Ministers to the effect that they

* The English word "congress" is used.

would not injure the independence of Afghanistan. Perhaps you sent your letter before you got mine. Now I have heard that you have appointed your son, Muhammad Yakub, as your Regent, and have received an order from the Emperor to the effect that it is impossible to assist you with troops now. I hope you will be fortunate. It all depends on the decree of God. Believe me that the friendship which I made with you will be perpetual. It is necessary to send back General Rozgonoff and his companions. You can keep Dr. Yuralski with you, if you please. No doubt the doctor will be of use to you and to your dependants. I hope our friendship will continue to be strengthened, and that intercourse will be carried on between us.

*Letter from General Von Kaufmann to Shere Ali, dated
7th January 1879.*

Your letter, dated 27th Zel Hijja (22nd December 1878), has reached me. I was pleased to hear tidings of your good health. The Emperor has caused the British Government to agree to the continuance of Afghan independence. The English Ministers have promised this. I earnestly request you not to leave your kingdom. As far as possible, consider your own interests and do not lose your independence. For the present, come to terms with the British Government. If you do not want to go back to Kabul for this purpose, you can write to your son, Muhammad Yakub Khan, to make peace with the English as you may direct him. Do not leave the soil of Afghanistan at this time, because it will be of benefit to you. My words are not without truth, because your arrival in Russian territory will make things worse.

*Letter from General Von Kaufmann to Shere Ali, dated
11th January 1879.*

After compliments.—The Foreign Minister, General Gorchakoff, has informed me by telegraph that the Emperor has

directed me to trouble you to come to Tashkand for the present. I, therefore, communicate this news to you with great pleasure. At the same time I may mention that I have received no instructions about your journey to Petersburg. My personal interview with you will increase our friendship greatly.

*Letter from Shere Ali to General Von Kaufmann, dated
2nd February 1879.*

After compliments.— After my arrival at Mazar-i-Sharif at this time your three friendly letters, dated 8th, 13th, and 17th Moharam (2nd, 7th, and 11th January 1879), respectively, came to hand. I perused them and understood their contents. The sweet expressions contained in your letter of the 17th have sweetened the palate of my desire, and the flavour of the royal favours of His Majesty the Emperor, and the desire of having a joyous interview with you have fixed my attention to visit Russia. I had determined to start for my destination shortly, as, after consultation with the Envoy of the illustrious Government, I intimated my intention to His Majesty the King of Bokhara; but, by the decree of God, I was suddenly attacked with catarrh and a fit of gout, and am now under the treatment of the Russian doctor and my own physicians. This circumstance has prevented me from proceeding on my journey. Whereas the time is passing away, I have given the Envoy leave to return, and deputed my brother,* Sirdar Shere Ali Khan, Shah Muhammad Khan, and Kazi Abdul Kadir Khan, who are the trustees and ministers of the God-granted Government, with all speed to Tashkand, to wait upon you without delay, and represent to you verbally the state of affairs here, and remind you of that passage in your letter, which conveyed a re-assurance to me, and which is to the effect that His Imperial Majesty the Emperor has exacted an agreement from the British Government, and that the British Ministers have

* Sirdar Shere Ali Khan (Kandahar) is his cousin,

given an assurance to your Ambassador in London that they will not interfere with the independence of Afghanistan. But the English, notwithstanding that agreement and assurance, have advanced from Sherabad to Jellalabad, and from Pishin to Kandahar; an account of which events the Ministers of this God-granted Government will give you in detail. I hope that you will consider whatever my Ministers may state regarding the affairs of this God-granted Government true, and will kindly dismiss them with as little delay as possible after complying with their request.

Let it be known to you that I am exceedingly pleased with the noble qualities and good manners of General Rosgonoff and his companions. Indeed, the General is a conscientious and able officer of his own illustrious Government, and a well-wisher of this God-granted Government.

FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE RUSSIAN AUTHORITIES AND YAKUB KHAN, SUBSEQUENT TO THE DEATH OF SHERE ALI.

*Letter from General Von Kaufmann to Yakub Khan,
dated 9th March 1879.*

Wishing you complete happiness, the following are my words:—

With deep sorrow I heard the sad news of the demise of my friend, your all-beloved, just father, the Amir Sahib, and I sincerely lament the heavy loss sustained by you and by the country of Afghanistan.

Your Highness, being the lawful heir—and having been called upon to become the ruler of the country by your late father himself, at a time of dire visitation sent by God—has now ascended the throne.

I offer you my felicitations and my most sincere wishes of every good.

As a friend of your late amiable father, I hope that you will foster the same good disposition and the same confidence towards me as did your father the late Amir Sahib.

I wish Your Highness wisely and justly to rule the people, who will not abandon you in these hard times, and who will be always ready to stand up for, and defend, your throne.

The envoys of your late father the Amir Sahib—Sirdar Shere Ali Khan, Wazir Shah Muhammad Khan, Kazi Abdul Kadar, and the Kamnab-Dabir Muhammad Hassan—are returning to be at your service. I am convinced that these men, who faithfully served your father, will as faithfully serve Your Highness.

May God grant you wisdom, health, and the love of your people!

The Governor-General of Turkistan,

(Signed) Adjutant-General VON KAUFMANN, 1st.

City of Tashkend.

The "25th" February* 1879 (=the 16th Rabi-ul-Awul 1296 H.).

*Letter from Major-General Ivanoff to Sirdar Musa Khan
(son of Yakub Khan), dated 29th March 1879.*

On the 26th of Rabi-ul-Awul (20th March), at an auspicious moment, I received your letter which you sent to me, and understood its contents. I was very much pleased, and at once communicated it to General Kaufmann, the Governor-General. With regard to what you wrote about the friendly relations between the Russian and Afghan Governments, and your own desire for friendship, I have the honour to state that we are also desirous of being friends. The friendship between the two Governments existed in the time of the late Amir, and I

* (New style: 9th March.)—Tr.

hope that it will be increased and strengthened by Amir Muhammad Yakub Khan. May God change the wars in your country to happiness; may peace reign in it; and may your Government be strengthened. I have been forwarding all your letters to the Governor-General, General Kaufmann. May God keep you safe.

The Zarafshan Province; Governor, Major-General Ivanoff.

Written and sealed by the General.

Written on 29th March 1879=5th Rabi-ul-Sani 1296.

*Letter from General Von Kaufmann to Sirdar Musa Khan,
dated 8th April 1879.*

To the highly respected the Crown Prince of the Afghan throne, Sirdar Muhammad Musa Khan; to Ulan Aidar Khan*; to Amir Muhammad; to Nur Muhammad†; and to Khabibulla.

I wish you all constantly to enjoy the favour and the goodwill of the new ruler, the Amir Sahib.

After which the following are my words:—

I cannot but tell you candidly that the news of the demise of my friend the Amir Sahib Shere Ali Khan has profoundly grieved me. From your letter of the 26th Rabi-ul-Awul,‡ I learnt that you, Sirdar Muhammad Musa Khan, as being the lawful heir, have been chosen by Vaalian, which proves the good disposition and attachment of the Afghan people towards your family and your race. To me, an old friend of your late grandfather, this news has given unspeakable joy.

* General Gholam Hydar Khan, late Deputy-Governor of Afghan Turkistan.

† Nur Muhammad Khan, son of the late Sirdar Sultan Muhammad Khan, half-brother of the late Amir Dost Muhammad Khan.

‡ 20th March.

I wish you all good fortune in all your good undertakings, and likewise that you may prove powerful supporters of the fortunate Amir Sahib Muhammad Yakub Khan. God grant it.

The Governor-General of Turkistan,

(Signed) Adjutant-General VON KAUFMANN.

City of Tashkend, the 27th March (new style, 8th April) 1879.

*Letter from General Von Kaufmann to Yakub Khan, dated
7th May 1879.*

After my wishes and prayers for Your Highness's safety and prosperity, I take the opportunity to write that, having bidden (a temporary) farewell to the affairs of the State entrusted to my charge,* I intend to start for the metropolis of the Russian empire on the 15th May, corresponding to the first week of Jamadi-us-Sani. I, therefore, beg to intimate this my intention to Your Highness, and hope that Your Highness, considering me your sincere friend and staunch well-wisher, will keep me informed of every occurrence that takes place in Your Highness's dominions while I am away.

I have given orders that any letters that may be received from the Great Amir (Your Highness) during my absence, should be forwarded with all possible despatch to St. Petersburg. May the Most High God prolong Your Highness's life, and grant Your Highness a great victory.

(Here the seal of the General.)

(Here his signature in Russian.)

Dated 25th April (new style, 7th May) 1879.

* According to the Russian version, "on behalf of matters connected with the region entrusted to me."

The above letter from General Von Kaufmann was entrusted to a special messenger. Its despatch was notified by the Russian Governor of Katti Kurgan to General Gholam Hyder Ali, Deputy Governor of Afghan Turkistan, in the following communication, dated 29th April (new style, 11th May) :—

“So long as the system of the universe continues in its working order through the instrumentality of Providence, so long may the Most Merciful and Gracious God continue you, who hold a high dignity and rank, and who do not stand in need of any praise or eulogy, on the path of prosperity, and maintain you on the masnad of authority, and make your days roll on agreeably to your wishes for the sake of the Chief of the Prophets and his holy posterity.

“I beg to inform you that my servant Nasir Khan is, at this happy moment, leaving with a letter from the Governor of the province of Turkestan, for His Highness the Amir Muhammad Yakub Khan, whose assistance is highly valued. It is hoped that you, out of regard for friendship, will send the man on with your own servant, and cause him to be presented to the Amir, with the letter, and that you will kindly inform me of the delivery of the letter and the presentation of the man to the Amir, as well as of the state of His Highness' health.

“This will not, of course, be more than a friend will do for a friend. May God make you happy and prosperous both in this world and the next, for the sake of His Prophet and his posterity.”

*Letter from Yakub Khan to General Von Kaufmann, dated
26th July 1879.*

Your friendly letter, dated the 7th May, reached me by the hands of Nasir Khan, and I fully understood all the friendly and neighbourly meanings contained in it.

The state of affairs here is that peace and friendship have been established between my Government and the British Government, in a way which is conducive to the advantage of

both. All cause of quarrel and misunderstanding has disappeared from between the two parties, and the officers of both Governments are now pleased and happy. As Nasir Khan has been dismissed, and is about to set out to his home, I have thought proper to answer your friendly letter, and to add that if, at any time, the officers of your Government, in accordance with the rules of friendship and neighbourhood, should require to communicate with my Government, either in writing or verbally, they will no doubt consider it advisable to do so through the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg, the Russian Minister in London, His Excellency the Viceroy of India, or the British Envoy at Kabul, in conformity with the Treaty which has been concluded between my Government and the British Government.

No. 1.

TREATY between the Russian Government and Amir Shere Ali Khan, written from memory in Kabul by one of the Amir's officials.

1. The Russian Government engages that the friendship of the Russian Government with the Government of Amir Shere Ali Khan, Amir of all Afghanistan, will be a permanent and perpetual one.

2. The Russian Government engages that as Sirdar Abdulla Jan, son of the Amir, is dead, the friendship of the Russian Government with any person whom the Amir may appoint heir-apparent to the throne of Afghanistan, and with the heir of the heir-apparent, will remain firm and perpetual.

3. The Russian Government engages that if any foreign enemy attacks Afghanistan, and the Amir is unable to drive him out, and asks the assistance of the Russian Government, the Russian Government will repel the enemy, either by means of advice or such other means as it may consider proper.

4. The Amir of Afghanistan will not wage war with any

foreign power without consulting the Russian Government, and without its permission.

5. The Amir of Afghanistan engages that he will always report, in a friendly manner, to the Russian Government what goes on in his kingdom.

6. The Amir of Afghanistan will communicate every wish and important affair of his to General Kaufmann, Governor-General of Turkistan, and the Governor-General will be authorised by the Russian Government to fulfil the wishes of the Amir.

7. The Russian Government engages that the Afghan merchants who may trade and sojourn in Russian territory will be safe from wrong, and that they will be allowed to carry away their profits.

8. The Amir of Afghanistan will have the power to send his servants to Russia to learn arts and trades, and the Russian officers will treat them with consideration and respect as men of rank.

9. (Does not remember.)

10. I, Major-General Stolieteff Nicholas, being a trusted Agent of the Russian Government, have made the above-mentioned Articles between the Russian Government and the Government of Amir Shere Ali Khan, and have put my seal to them.

No. 2.

TREATY between the Russian Government and Shere Ali Khan, written from memory in Kabul by one of the Ameer's officials.

1. Friendship has from old time existed between our Government and the Afghan Government, and now it is renewed.

2. The friendship of both Governments, with the heir-apparent, whoever he may be, and with the heir of the heir-apparent, will remain firm.

3. Everything will be reported by the Amir to the Yarin Badshah, i.e. the (Russian) Governor (General of Turkistan).

4. The Russian Government will, through the Governor (General of Turkistan), assist the Amir with troops, if ever he is attacked by a foreign power.

5. The Amir should affirm his power in the country. The Russian Government will, of course, call to account any members of his family, or other person, who may intrigue or rise against him.

5. As friendship exists between the two Governments, it is proper that our merchants should go to Afghanistan for the benefit of both parties.

7. The ancient country of Afghanistan will be returned to the Amir; when, by the help of God, existing difficulties are overcome by the aid of troops.



NOTE to p. 364.

The splendid march of General Roberts' twenty thousand men and followers, through a strange and hostile country, has been equalled and distanced by individual regiments as late as the Indian Mutiny of 1857; notably by the "Corps of Guides."

"It was on the morning of June 9th that the 'Guides' arrived before Delhi. They had accomplished a distance of 580 miles in 22 days; that, too, at the hottest season of the year. There had been but three halts during the whole march, and those only by special orders. It was a march hitherto unequalled in India in point of speed, an average of 27 miles a day. . . They came in travel-stained, but not travel-worn, light of heart and light of step; nor had they been in camp more than a few hours when they crossed swords with the enemy's cavalry, and drove them back in disorder right up to the city walls."—Bosworth Smith, *Life of Lord Lawrence*.